the VITALITY of OLD TESTAMENT TRADITIONS

SECOND EDITION

WALTER BRUEGGEMANN
& HANS WALTER WOLFF

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Second Edition

The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions

by

WALTER BRUEGGEMANN
and
HANS WALTER WOLFF

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Abbreviations

AB ..... Anchor Bible
BASOR ..... *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and Baghdad*
Bibl. Eph. Th. L. ..... *Bibliotheca Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses*
BZ ..... *Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW ..... *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
CBQ ..... *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
EvTh ..... *Evangelische Theologie*
FRLANT ..... *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Altes und Neuen Testaments*
HTR ..... *Harvard Theological Review*
IDB ..... *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
IDB Suppl ..... *Supplement to Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*
JAAR ..... *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JBL ..... *Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSOT ..... *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOT Suppl ..... *Supplement to Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
KBL ..... *L. Köhler, W. Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testament Libros*
KTAV ..... KTAV Publishing House
KuD ..... *Kerygma und Dogma*
MT ..... Masoretic Text
RB ..... *Revue Biblique*
RHPhR ..... *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*
ThB ..... *Theologische Bücherei*
ThZ ..... *Theologische Zeitschrift*
TLZ ..... *Theologische Literaturzeitung*
USQR ..... *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*
VT ..... *Vetus Testamentum*
VT Suppl ..... *Vetus Testamentum Supplement*
WuD NF ..... *Wort und Dienst*
ZAW ..... *Zeitschrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZAW Beih ..... *Zeitschrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft, Beiheft*
ZTK ..... *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

Preface

Interpretation of Scripture is and always has been problematic for both synagogue and church. We wish to have freedom in interpretation so that fresh insight and new meaning might break out among us which we say is the work of the spirit—but not so much freedom that the Bible becomes simply a vehicle for our pet ideas. On the other hand, we must interpret with discipline so that there is sound method and intellectual consistency in our interpretation—but not so much discipline that our interpretive work becomes cold and harmless.

The essays that follow intend to take the Bible seriously, in all freshness and newness. They invoke a kind of vitality that does not require mindless enthusiasm, or disregard of critical discipline. These essays affirm substantive meanings in the text. That is, they are concerned with what the text says and they break new ground in that regard. But they are also studies in method. In high evangelical fashion they hold together the best critical thinking of disciplined scholarship and the deepest passion to hear the text as God's word. The authors are convinced that we need not choose between critical awareness and passion, and indeed that we may not have one without the other. An evangelical hermeneutic, as characterized here, believes that the non-negotiables of exegesis are a responding faith and a perceptive mind.

Many today insist that sound critical exegesis is an obstacle to hearing the gospel in Biblical text. Such claims are, of course, part of the growing anti-intellectualism of our day which perceives reasonableness as an enemy of faith, insight, and freedom. These essays provide and insist upon an alternative, namely that critical discipline is a sure way in which the text is opened to a fresh hearing and the way in which its real authority is received among us. The authority of the text is not substantiated by pious disregard of what we know, but by mobilizing our best critical faculties for understanding and taking the text seriously.

It is argued here that every stratum of the Pentateuch represents a fresh sensing of vitality in the ancient traditions—revising faith for a new context when faith was sorely being tested and tried. Precisely in such crunches does the text disclose its vitality—its powerful authority as a way to discern what is going on and what is demanded in one's situation. The test of exegesis comes when the faithful finally stand up for their faith against subtle or not so subtle forms of syncretism and perversion. The work of Hans Walter Wolff, distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Heidelberg, breathes the spirit of the Confessing Church of Germany; it expresses a passion for the text and a confidence that it will speak with vitality when we listen with disciplined ear. Wolff gained his perspective on the text during days when Christians in Germany had to decide how serious they were about the gospel. And from the ordeal of that period Wolff also began to see that each generation in the Bible had had to make a like decision.

The essays here I have brought together specifically for students who want to develop a sound method of interpretation—and for church people, ministers and lay persons who intend to hear the text in all its vitality, with both faith and discipline. In preparing the introductory essay, I have benefitted from the gracious support and wise counsel of Hans Walter Wolff, who has combined in his lifetime the ripest critical learning and the richest confessional way of being faithful to the God of Scripture. Both my appreciation for him and my debt to him are very great. And of course, behind Wolff, the debt in these pages to Gerhard von Rad, friend and colleague of Wolff, is both great and obvious.

Professor Wolff and I reached our agreement on publishing these essays in the fall of 1973 when he was in residence in St. Louis at Concordia Seminary. He urged his colleagues there to stand for the gospel just as the Confessing Church had done in its ordeal under Nazi recrimination and threat. Since that fall, those of us who lived through the crisis at that seminary have viewed it, among other things, as a dispute about hermeneutical presuppositions and exegetical method. The issue in that dispute, as in these essays, is the vitality of a tradition which always leads the community to new

affirmations and new depths of faith, because that tradition is always on the move in new situations. Wolff's hermeneutical posture, both free and faithful, looms large as one that can help the church to do its work and confess its faith and sing its doxologies.

Walter Brueggemann
Eden Theological Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri
March 15, 1974

Introduction

THE WORD IN ITS PARTICULARITY AND POWER

by Walter Brueggemann

Israel, the community of faith in the Old Testament, was a people with a precious memory. Very early she settled on a memory of promise and deliverance. She regarded these memories as normative for all her life and faith. But Israel was also a people living amid historical pressures and tensions. And she took, or tried to take, those risks and threats seriously, daring to believe that in the very midst of them, she would discern the meaning and destiny of her life.

The Old Testament is the ongoing effort (sometimes struggle) of bringing her precious memory to play on the historical pressure that was shaping her life. Thus the Old Testament is not just the rarified memory of what she believed most and best. Rather, for those who would read it so, the Old Testament represents the clash of faith tradition and historical fact. Hans Walter Wolff, more than any other recent scholar, has emphasized this point—that Israel's memory did not begin or continue in a vacuum. The Bible was not shaped in isolation. It was always shaped and reshaped in serious confrontation between Israel and those, inside and out, who wanted to alloy her faith. Again and again, emerging events put new questions before Israel's memory and insisted upon fresh answers from the believing community.

Sometimes Israel's situation invited strong affirmations, of enormous insight and power. At other times the cultural context sorely tried the tradition, evoking reactions merely defensive and parochial. But in each case, and therefore behind every text, there was a moment of meeting; and out of that came a new affirmation and a fresh statement of faith. Out of each meeting the tradition was reshaped and faith took new form, a form it never had before. But

also out of that meeting, the cultural context was redefined. The new statement of faith placed the historical issue, whatever it was, in a new context. New demands were made in that moment. Fresh hopes were offered to those who could hope. And each time, faith became possible, just when the old forms of faith seemed to have lost point.

In all three of his essays presented here, Wolff has been able to focus on that precise moment of meeting. Indeed, he has made the meeting of memory and crisis a hermeneutical beginning point. This is the primary interpretive question he put to any text: what in this text can we discern of the meeting between memory and the historical pressure? Thus in every text he begins with a search for the *Verkündigungswille* (the gravamen, or message of the work) which crystallized at the moment of meeting. This message text always draws its statement from tradition, yet it is always a statement for the present: it changes the present historical setting; it lets the faithful see in their surroundings something they could not see without the memory, something of God's incredible gifts or his uncompromising demands.

The purpose of this book is to make available three essays by Wolff and a fourth by Brueggemann which follows Wolff's methodology. But obviously the methodology utilized in these essays did not emerge suddenly. It has a gradual and diverse history, and of that history Wolff is self-consciously a faithful heir. Thus to consider the following essays intelligently, we must review the scholarly history which stands behind them.

1

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED IN STUDY OF THE PENTATEUCH

by Walter Brueggemann

The scholarly tradition that Wolff draws upon goes back to the very birth of Biblical interpretation, but for our purposes, it is enough to consider the work of scholars in the eighteenth and ninteenth centuries, largely in Germany where the major gains were made. In that period, there was an increasing insistence that the Biblical text must be subjected to the most rigorous study according to the best canons of scientific analysis. It will be noted that such an approach assumes that the Bible is a book like any other book and that any claim of divine authority cannot be used as a shield to deflect careful, analytical study. Such an approach, typical of its period's confident rationalism, led to secularization of the Bible, and unquestionably, to an erosion of its authority[1]. Thus the usual judgment of literalists, that critical study undermines the authority of Scripture, has a seed of truth in it. But we must understand that fact in the context of other gains and losses related to the rise of critical study. The approach of the great historical critics represents an exceedingly important decision for interpretation. It was clear that those who subjected the Bible to the norms of scientific analysis were uninterested in questions of authority, and in general unconcerned with the meaning of the text, beyond a one-dimensional historical, scientific meaning. On the other side, let it be said that these scholars also had no interest in denying the authority of the text. They simply had no interest in the question, one way or another.

Inevitably, the text became controlled by scholars, whereas previously scholars had subjected themselves to the text. The text now was subject to their tools, methods, and conclusions. The controlling factor was no longer any claim of Biblical authority but now was scientific method, which enjoyed enormous popularity and re-

spect in this period. No longer were scholars servants of the text. Clearly they intended to be its masters, and the possible meanings of the text were controlled by the criteria of reasonableness. On principle, what was regarded as "supranatural" was denied or explained in other ways.

Inevitably the text came to be treated as a piece of evidence to be examined and explained. It was cut off from the community which fashioned and preserved it[2]. Any advocatory dimension, whether ancient or contemporary, was lost and the text became an "it." It did not propose a subject to be taken seriously, but became an object to be explained. Obviously there could be no dialogue with an "it." The movement was all one way. The scholar controlled the text; the book became an inanimate object. In this kind of approach the scholar is never addressed, never held accountable to the text, never in direct touch with the creating, preserving community discerned behind it. The profound change of outlook worked by science in culture generally had produced an equally profound change in the character of the Bible.

Now since all of us, writer and reader, are heirs of the cultural change which science produced, all of us nurtured and shaped by it, we must not treat it too harshly or reject it out of hand. We must recognize first that we are products of that culture, that no matter how radically or conservatively we view the Biblical text, our whole lives and ways of thought have been molded by scientific scholarship. But second and more important, we must recognize that that manner of scholarship has achieved invaluable gains for us and we may not discount them.

It is useful to see an analogy in the history of medical research. Medicine could not really advance until science had freed us enough to regard the human body as an "it," to be dissected and examined in detail without regard to questions of human personhood and meaning. Indeed, many of the issues in medical research today concern getting free of such a cold, analytical approach to the body, and recovering the human dimensions of mystery and value[3]. In a parallel way, Scriptural study has had its time of excessive manipulation of the text without attention to its strange claim to power. But as in medicine, only after we have been

through that can we view with honesty the aesthetic wholeness of the text.

Thus, analytical medical research has its counterpart in objective study of the Bible. Humanistic medicine has its counterpart in a recognition of the symbolic, aesthetic, and religious dimension of the Bible. In each case the second would be falsified had we not had the great gains of the former. In both medicine and Scriptural study, we have moved beyond analysis to dimensions of wholeness and mystery in which the human body has value and the Biblical text has authority. In neither case are we uncontrolled masters. In both cases we are called on to bow before a mystery more profound than the best tools of dissection can unfold. But in order to discern where we now are, we must seek to appreciate the efforts of the older scholarship which now seems so problematic.

There were of course many scholars engaged in dissecting the text according to scientific methodology, but the movement culminated in the work of Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918). Wellhausen taught at Marburg and Halle Universities and wrote *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*[4], a summary statement of this entire enterprise of research. He was a remarkably able scholar and the importance of his book can hardly be overestimated. Wellhausen was taught in the best German tradition of historical scholarship. He was inspired by Ewald and by the kind of vigorous historical methodology usually associated with Ranke. It is important in understanding his contribution to note that Wellhausen was first of all an historian and was principally concerned to write or indeed to reconstruct a history of Israel. And, in the fashion of his time, he intended to write history on the basis of clear literary sources. Thus he pursued a quest for reliable documents. His prolegomena is intended as a statement about sources.

Concerned as he was only with piecing together the facts of history, Wellhausen asked of the Pentateuch only factual questions. He viewed it—as it was bound to be viewed in the scholarly world of the nineteenth century—in an intensely literary way so that questions of dating, authorship, literary unity, and historical reliability were the important ones. Such questions, of course, severely limited the kind of knowledge that could be gained.

For our purposes the most important gain of Wellhausen's work is his propounding of the documentary hypothesis. By careful attention to grammatical form and style, vocabulary, and then religious perspective, Wellhausen and his colleagues offered the powerful and persuasive hypothesis that in the early books of the Old Testament (the first five or six or nine, depending on the view) we may discern four very different literary strata, each fashioned by a different "writer" or group of writers. Each distinct layer (document) possesses its own character, its peculiar vocabulary, its distinctive biases and understandings of history and geography, and its own religious interests and presuppositions.

The center of the hypothesis located portions of Deuteronomy (D) in 621 B.C. on the basis of 2 Kings 22-23. The scroll found there was held to be some form of the book of Deuteronomy. Clearly in the early parts of the Old Testament, there are primitive traditions which lack the sophistication and sureness of Deuteronomy and are therefore prior. This earlier material is held to be two literary efforts, one using the name "Jahweh" for God and so dubbed (J) the other using "Elohim" and so, called (E) A fourth source was thought to be later than 621 and is in a style so remarkably prosaic—obsessed as it is with cultic punctilio—that it must have been written by priests, and so it has been called (P)

Thus this scientific approach yielded a notion of four separate "documents":

J from the eighth century,
E from the seventh century,
D from the seventh century, and
P from the fifth century.

While there have been refinements and criticisms of this scheme and occasionally rejections, on the whole it is still standard running in Old Testament studies. For our purposes, what is important is not to accept or reject the hypothesis, but to note the mood of its scholarship.

The scholars represented by Wellhausen attributed to the text not only no particular authority, but no vitality. And they were left with only fragments and pieces—as emptied of spark as an open cadaver. The documentary hypothesis as it was characteristically

stated was negative, i.e., it was not employed to listen better to the text but only to explain such literary problems as duplication, repetition, and contradiction. The substance of Wellhausen's conclusions is still widely accepted, but the intent of his scholarship is now thought to be intolerably narrow—to take a literary document and with tools of a rigorous criticism to dissect it in the most mechanical way. Wellhausen's analysis was an impressive achievement, but it was effected at the cost of making the Bible, for the observer, a lifeless specimen.

It is clear that the enormous influence of Wellhausen has largely shaped Pentateuchal study. The result has been a view of the text as static and fixed. To accomplish his objective of writing a disinterested historical report, Wellhausen reduced the Pentateuch to a document to be dissected, a document not only without authority, but more importantly, without import, from which nothing could be expected.

The next major step in the study of the Pentateuch came with the work of Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) who taught in Berlin, Giessen, and Halle and published his commentary on Genesis at the turn of the century[5].

Gunkel's commentary is more than a commentary, for it proposes an entirely new approach to the study of the old narrative traditions. It is an effort to penetrate behind Wellhausen's literary presuppositions and to raise questions about the tradition's earlier, oral form—a question Wellhausen did not and could not raise because of his concern with "documents." In turning from written documents to oral traditions, Gunkel proposed a way of study which was highly subjective and which necessarily lacked the scientific controls so essential to Wellhausen. A much different mood was required, a mood embodied in the Romantic tradition of Herder and Lessing, to which Gunkel felt himself heir. Whereas Wellhausen was a scientist in his methods and perspectives, Gunkel believed that a scientific approach could not answer or even raise all the important questions. He asserted that "Exegesis, in its highest sense, is more an art [*Kunst*] than a science [*Wissenschaft*]."[6] By this he meant that aesthetic sensitivity to the movement, flow, and form of a passage is essential to understanding it, and that such

sensitivity could not be brought to bear by scientific control and bloodless dissection. Gunkel urged and cultivated a childlike acuity, open to dimensions of wonder and fantasy. He was alive to the mystery of poetic form and knew that interpretation required a subjective as well as objective side. We have said that for Wellhausen the text became an "it" to be controlled. It is not too much to say that for Gunkel the text became a "thou" which was alive and addressed the interpreter, drawing him into dialogues that held meanings not strictly subject to scientific scrutiny.

Gunkel's perspective resulted in several important gains for interpretation. Although he accepted Wellhausen's source analysis, recognized a great debt to him and never intended to break from him, he was led to pose questions which Wellhausen regarded as illegitimate or trivial.

Concerning the age of the documents, Wellhausen had taken the positivistic stand that we can only date the document and there is no disciplined way to date its shifting, oral antecedents. Gunkel dared to pursue a study of these oral, pre-written forms, and affirmed the great antiquity of the material, an antiquity behind any which scientific criticism could treat. Whereas Wellhausen tended to date the documents reasonably late, Gunkel dated their oral forerunners quite early, i.e., back to the times they purport to speak of. This marks a turn away from scientific skepticism about the historical claims of the documents.

Gunkel made a most important step sociologically when he urged that the oral stage of the tradition could only be understood as an effort of a community seeking to preserve its memory and state its identity. The stories of the Pentateuch do not exist in a literary vacuum, but in the oral give-and-take of speakers and listeners. And it is the task of modern interpreters as best they can to reconstruct and listen in on those exchanges, to understand what is being spoken and heard, and communicated and understood. Obviously such an understanding does not refer simply to the clear intent of the words used (at which Wellhausen was a master) but to the total formal and aesthetic happening involved in speaking and hearing.

It is this sociological concern which led Gunkel, following the

earlier suggestions of Herder and DeWette, to develop the method of form criticism, i.e., to discern the characteristic form in which communities transmit and communicate various kinds of materials. He observed that communities develop mannerisms of form, style, and nuance which are important bearers of meaning. Moreover it is possible to discern the settings (*Sitze im Leben*) in which the forms are employed. When we perceive the form and setting in which a community communicates meaning, we shall be able to sense much more of the interactional freight of the text which lies beneath the surface of the words.

Gunkel's perspective and training led him to see that the Bible did not emerge or exist in a literary vacuum but in a vibrant sociological context. And as he studied and recovered something of that context, he was led to see that the community of Israel had no monopoly on either forms of communication or settings. This led him to consider Old Testament texts in the light of cultural remains from other ancient Near Eastern peoples. Gunkel had an interest in Old Testament religion per se, but he wanted to understand it in the broadest terms possible; so he looked for recurrence of similiar themes and forms elsewhere.

Whereas Wellhausen had sought the great literary continuities (documents), Gunkel's attention to detail led him to focus on the small unit—the individual episode or pericope. While he gave some attention to the later developments of clustering and the grouping of larger literary entities, his major energies were devoted to understanding the forms and settings of the individual unit, where he believed the most intense aesthetic power was to be found. He characterized the special story types of myth, saga, legend, and fable as bearers of particular meaning. Variously the types have a function in the community of creating wonder and amazement, of establishing identity, and of granting legitimacy.

Gunkel's work for a long time remained a minority report. It was not attuned to the scientific rationalism which characterized scholarship of the period; and it was viewed with particular disdain in America, for it required a kind of sensitivity not valued or considered legitimate in scholarly circles. Only lately, in the main through the efforts of James Muilenburg and Brevard Childs and

their students, has attention to form gained acceptance in American studies[7].

The parameters for questions of interpretation were largely set by Wellhausen and Gunkel. Wellhausen's approach is scientific, Gunkel's artistic. Wellhausen is consistently analytical, Gunkel synthetic. Wellhausen aims for precision, Gunkel for suggestive nuance. Wellhausen speaks of documents whereas Gunkel treats of traditions. Wellhausen values discipline, Gunkel stresses imagination. Happily, scholarship has refused to choose between them, for it is clear that responsible exegesis needs both. One must ask with Wellhausen, what do the documents in fact say? And with Gunkel one must ask, what seems to be going on in the transmission of the text? Scholarly discipline invites us to view the text as an "it," an object we control and explain. Poetic sensitivity requires that we also regard the text as a "thou," a partner in conversation which cannot be reduced to one meaning, but which always hints at fresh meanings and affirmations. After a long period of precise critical study, we are now in a time when the temptation is great to abandon critical discipline for the sake of intuition. Or to say it another way, after the rigors of rationalism, the church's handling of the text now is in the direction of romanticism. But the eminence of both Wellhausen and Gunkel in the history of interpretation ought to remind us that some balance between the two must be maintained.

As concerns the Pentateuch, Wellhausen and Gunkel are not to be seen as successive stages in scholarship as though one superseded the other, nor as alternatives as though one must exclude the other. Rather they articulate two very different interpretive tasks, both of which are necessary to any responsible understanding of the text. The two emphases must be treated as complementary.

The next major scholarly effort which decisively influenced Pentateuchal study was that associated with William Foxwell Albright. One of America's most learned men, certainly its most gifted and influential Old Testament scholar, Albright made unquestionably the most important contribution to Biblical studies, and specifically to Old Testament studies, of any American.

Born in 1891, he spent his scholarly career developing a program at Johns Hopkins University that trained a large share of

the productive American Old Testament scholars of the period 1925–1960. Albright's primary interest was in philosophy of history, and a great deal of his effort went to demolish an evolutionary view of the progressive development of religion in the Bible, a view apparently informed by Hegel and associated with Wellhausen. In a refutation of such evolutionism, Albright offered the alternative of understanding history as organic[8]. He held that Israel's religious history did not witness new emergents but rather was the continuing actualization of what was in fact implict ab ovo, in its earliest religion, from the time of Moses. In light of this view of history (supported by a mass of philological and archaeological evidence), his interpretations always stressed the importance of the early period (Moses) and dated the Pentateuchal materials as early as evidence permitted. (We may note that like Gunkel, Albright accepted in principle the documentary hypothesis of Wellhausen, but he strongly rejected the idea of a developing religion, which had been derived from the hypothesis[9].)

The evidence to which Albright appealed was archaeological, and in the area of archaeology, we meet a peculiarly American perspective. Albright produced a number of gifted and competent students, and himself had an enormous output—and these have developed a fresh perspective and a fresh methodology for investigation of Biblical materials. Albright of course did not invent the notion of using excavated evidence to interpret the Bible, but more than anyone he created scientific controls so that data could be accurately assessed and employed. Along with archaeology, he and his students placed linguistic and philological studies on a new plane, establishing controls on epigraphy for purposes of dating.

Albright has taught us to ask fresh questions of the text, questions concerning its reliability as history. Even more than Gunkel, he has taken seriously the data of all Near Eastern cultures as an aid to understanding the Bible. Albright's conclusions have been characteristically conservative on historical questions, so that in every way possible, the historical claims of the Bible have been upheld. In his diverse and prolific writings, he has taught us that the text must always be considered in relation to archaeological

evidence, documentary and otherwise, Canaanite and Near Eastern generally.

In the history of scholarship, Albright can be roughly located in relation to the Germans. Gunkel's *The Legends of Genesis* was reissued in 1964, and in an introduction to it Albright aligned himself squarely with Gunkel and against Wellhausen[10]. Indeed there is a hint in his various writings that attack upon Wellhausen and his developmental hypothesis has been a major preoccupation—to the neglect of other, more positive matters. Albright coincides with Gunkel especially in (a) his concern for the antiquity of the tradition, and (b) his attention to non-Biblical evidence and parallels.

But Albright's brief essay on Gunkel is misleading. To be sure, Albright's sympathies and interests are closer to those of Gunkel, but the tone and texture of his work more nearly resemble Wellhausen. It is clear that Albright's method is more scientific than artistic, that he values disciplined, scientific evidence more than playful imagination; and it is also clear that his ultimate concern is historical. As we have seen, Wellhausen's entire literary hypothesis was to establish a valuation of documents for the writing of history. In like fashion, Albright's dating of documents, his study of epigraphy and linguistics, were intended to locate the traditions, and thereby to reclaim the historicity of the early period claimed in the Bible itself. This is of course a legitimate and important enterprise. It is noted here to call attention to the tension between scholarly discipline and artistic sensitivity which lies within Albright's work, a tension indeed that must be maintained by every responsible exegete.

For our purposes, Albright's most important contribution is the convincing claim that the traditions of the Pentateuch did not originate or exist in a social, political, or literary vacuum. Faithful understanding of the text requires that its beginning and its transmission be considered in the light of its milieu. And obviously, the sort of evidence amassed by Albright and his students is prerequisite to understanding milieux.

The fourth major advance in Pentateuch study comes from the work of Gerhard von Rad (1901–1971) who taught at the University of Heidelberg. While he fully accepted Wellhausen's

frame of the four documents and has demonstrated his own skill at literary analysis, he continues the aesthetic mood and intent of Gunkel, and indeed addresses tasks left unfinished by Gunkel.

Von Rad fully appreciates the aesthetic sense of Gunkel in seeing the "saga" as a way of appropriating history[11]. Exploration of the saga resists the precision and the objectivity championed by Wellhausen and Albright. Sagas require a more imaginative handling, and von Rad has obviously provided it. Whereas Gunkel had been preocccupied with single-episode units, von Rad uses the aesthetic approach and form-critical methods for larger units, namely the literary strands ("documents") identified by Wellhausen.

The different focus of Gunkel and von Rad is important to note in assessing their respective contributions. It is assumed by every critical scholar that the literature in the Pentateuch has a long process of growth and development behind it. While we cannot discern every stage, we can suggest at least three major developments: (a) the earliest form of oral tradition, which probably consisted of separated brief units of material, (b) the combination of those separate units into coherent wholes which became the strands of the Pentateuch (while this stage is commonly thought to be scribal, the process undoubtedly includes an oral dimension), and (c) the combining of the sources or strands into the unity we now have as the Pentateuch. Undoubtedly the process is much more complex than this, and much of it is beyond our recovery.

A thorough analysis of the material must consider every stage of its development, and give attention not only to the process but to the motives behind each specific sequence. Both Gunkel and von Rad hoped to explore this total process, but in fact both settled on a single stage. Gunkel proposed to study the whole history of the literature but in the end confined himself to the earliest stage—the oral material. This led him to be most sensitive to lyrical and poetic nuances, and not especially concerned with more stable theological substance. For the early stage of the literature, this emphasis was entirely appropriate. Von Rad, like Gunkel, also intended to focus on the entire process of the literature, but he too remained preoccupied with one moment, that of the completion of the strands. Being less concerned than Gunkel with the primitive,

oral dimension of the material, he paid much more attention to its conscious theological tendencies. Again, this focus was appropriate to that stage of the material. Both scholars fixed on one period of literary development, and that decision gave a certain leaning to their scholarship.

To this day we are in need of a thorough, consistent study of the whole process, from smallest units up to finished form. Perhaps no single scholar or group of scholars can complete that task. And perhaps no single method could deal with the varied issues it would raise. Nonetheless the canonical emphasis of Brevard Childs[12] would suggest that every stage in the development merits careful attention. It is likely that Bernard Anderson's forthcoming Genesis commentary will focus on the completed Genesis as such, thus expressing a synthetic concern more comprehensive than that of either Gunkel or von Rad. Anderson suggests that in some sense the consideration of whole entities is the proper study of Scripture, and that other inquiries, important as they are, in fact treat only the prehistory of the Bible.

For us it is important to note that the choice of which stage of development to study heavily influences both methodology and conclusions. It is important for students of the literature to avoid a preoccupation with any single stage and to perceive the literature in its total career, as being on the move in relation to the needs and imagination of the community which is in dialogue with it. The four essays presented here obviously focus on a single moment in that development—the completion of the large strands. This was von Rad's emphasis, and in recent scholarship we have nearly succumbed to making this moment the authoritative one when in truth it is only one stage in a long process, every stage of which is important to our understanding. Von Rad is sensitive to the fact that in the units analyzed by Gunkel, we miss the intent if we accept the unit "neat", with nothing added—as simply a saga like any other saga (which in fact is what Gunkel did).

Von Rad is aware that in the Pentateuch we have to do with stories that have been "refashioned."[13] In ancient Israel, the principal power in the forming of sagas was faith. "We do not have a single saga that has not received from faith its decisive stamp and orienta-

tion."[14] Notice that in this statement von Rad has introduced quite a new idea and a peculiar method of interpretation that is not in the text, but is brought to the text by the interpreter. With such an announcement von Rad clearly distinguishes himself from Gunkel. Von Rad's investigations are concerned with how the primitive material (in the small units Gunkel perceived) was reshaped and unified into a statement of faith. In his major writings on the subject[15], von Rad begins by locating a basic recital of faith which he regards as early and decisive for Israel's religion. The three recitals of Deuteronomy 6:20-25; 26:5-9; and Joshua 24:2-13, present the normative convictions Israel holds about herself. Von Rad engages in a kind of theological positivism at this point, because he believes these statements to be an adequate beginning for interpretation, without any ancillary data. In each of these fundamental statements, the basic elements are exodus and entry into the land—and in a lesser way, the promise to the fathers, wandering in the wilderness. These statements are silent about Sinai. Von Rad does not argue or demonstrate either the antiquity or centrality of these texts. Rather he simply asserts as the starting point for his hypothesis that these are the elements Israel believed earliest and most consistently, with both the most faithfulness and the most imagination.

Thus in seeking to move beyond Gunkel, he asks the question of any text, "How is this imaginative story related to the credo statement of Israel's most passionate belief?" His answer is that the sagas which are essentially pre-Israelite and pre-faith in origin have been "refashioned" under influence of the credo[16]. Or in another place he asserts that the "basic elements of what happened to Israel in her history with Yahweh" have been "poured" into the vessels of these sagas. The exact liturgic or literary process by which this happened is lost to us, but it is clear that in the process the stories have been transformed. What were simple tribal stories designed for teaching or entertainment (so Gunkel) have now been changed to be affirmations of faith. They now bear a message originally not part of them.

For example, the curious story of Abraham's lie to save himself (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:6-16) was probably preserved only

to show the beauty of Sarah and the shrewdness of Abraham. As such, the story carried no weight beyond celebrating the community's memory and identity. But under influence of the credo, the story becomes an assertion that Yahweh's promise to Abraham is valid, unless he doubts it and takes matters into his own hands, in which case the promise will be delayed and the outcome of history in doubt. The story so transformed is about the risk of trusting the promise, and the temptation to pursue alternative forms of survival. Von Rad has been able to argue with considerable power that in a later (tenth-century) context of secularization and rationalization, the credo became the magnet for ordering all the various stories, which were gradually built into a powerful and coherent whole. What had been a mixture of many kinds of unrelated stories became (was "forged" into)[17] a story with one flow, moving from creation to conquest, or in another way, from promise to fulfillment.

It will be seen that von Rad has drawn a new inference from the text. He is concerned—as Wellhausen, Gunkel, and Albright have not been—with the kerygmatic element in Scripture, i.e., with the affirmation of faith which the community expressed in preserving and handing on its sagas. Von Rad argues that the interest in preservation and transmission is a theological one. The people pass the stories on, not because they are interesting lore, but because they bear a message having to do with the life and identity of the community.

Within the context of the Confessing Church in Germany in the thirties, and under the dominating kerygmatic concern of Barth, von Rad set about to locate the *message* of each text in terms of the faith of Israel. He begins with the premise that the Bible is not finally history or literature but rather a *confession* from a community which seized any opportunity to confess and subscribe its faith. Obviously not every old story bore the correct message; so those that did not were requisitioned to.

> The requisition of ancient saga by theological reflection mirrors nothing other than what all Israel experienced by the revelation of Yahweh: the requisition of all

> areas of life, of all profane
> spheres by God's exacting and
> promising will [18].

Thus von Rad's views on the literature follow his powerful evangelical faith. As God claims secular life for his purposes, so the credo claims profane stories for its message.

Von Rad's view of theologizing is not that we must do it, but rather that we must observe the process going on in the text itself. His hermeneutic dictum is that we pay attention to the bold and vigorous way the text itself is doing theology. The critical moment in the life of the text is when it is requisitioned and becomes a vehicle for the message of the faith of Israel. And exegesis means precisely to locate the content of the assertion now discerned in the text[19].

The advance beyond Gunkel is obvious. Von Rad is no longer interested in the aesthetic as such, though his own commentary is extremely sensitive on such points. He is interested in how a text is enlisted to serve a message. He is indeed a faithful heir to Gunkel in both his method and his mood. His method takes serious account of form and setting. He is always struggling to hear the interaction of speaking and hearing that goes on with a text. And he is always in quest of the larger affirmation which narrow dissection may ignore or pervert. Von Rad is clear that the initial power of a saga is never reduced to the rational and logical. When the text does theology, it does so in a way that respects the spirit and mood of the story. But von Rad understands the saga transformed as having a new claim that exacts belief from the community. It is no longer a text "out there" to analyze; it has become a text addressing the community of faith at the point of its faith.

From von Rad, Old Testament study has gained a most important interpretive hypothesis. The Pentateuch did not arise in a vacuum but was made by a confessional community which worked carefully and knowingly, to shape its tradition to match its confession. A confessional construction is not one the interpreter brings to the text. It is one he finds already there. To disregard that element in a text is to reject its prime intent, which is kerygma.

Before leaving von Rad, we must note that in addition to

Gunkel, he is heavily indebted to two great historians of Old Testament study, his teacher Albrecht Alt and his colleague Martin Noth[20]. It was Alt who formulated the hypothesis of a tribal confederation which was essential to von Rad's thesis, suggesting as it did a communal, liturgic context in which the credo was recited. And it was Noth who isolated the Pentateuchal themes which permitted von Rad to interpret the work as he did. Von Rad came to stress the interaction of people and tradition, or we may say, of church and book. It is in the interaction of these that the text is heard and accepted as authoritative. Among American explications of von Rad, we may note the shrewd title of Napier, *From Faith to Faith*[21]. It was indeed von Rad who saw in the Bible a movement not only "to faith" but also "from faith" and therefore the book and the believing community belonged together. The faith of the community shaped texts which originally had no links with faith.

Pentateuchal study thus has witnessed a variety of scholarly approaches—literary, form-critical, archaeological, and those made from the history of traditions. These of course do not come in neat sequence, nor has any fresh approach intended to or in fact displaced a previous one. Each approach has provided important questions to ask the text, and any proper understanding of the text requires that all questions be faced.

Thus from Wellhausen we have learned to ask: to what literary strand does a text belong? Perhaps that is the beginning place for any responsible interpretation.

From Gunkel we have learned to ask of the preliterary oral tradition: in what form is the text expressed, from what life-setting is it derived, and what is going on in the text as an event of speaking and hearing?

From Albright we have learned to ask: what in the text is factually true to history amid a variety of traditional elements? And to that may be added: what in the text suggests Israel's uniqueness and what suggests her likeness to her cultural neighbors?

And from von Rad we have learned to ask: in what ways has the text been "refashioned" so that it becomes an expression of the normative faith of Israel, so that it is grasped in its kerygmatic intent? How is this text made a vehicle for the confessing faith of the community?

2

WOLFF'S KERYGMATIC METHODOLOGY

by Walter Brueggemann

We are now ready to consider the essays on the four sources, J, E, D, and P presented here by Wolff and Brueggemann. It is clear that Wolff is a conscious and faithful heir to a long history of Pentateuchal study. Obviously he follows Wellhausen in seeing that location of a text in its tradition strand (Wellhausen said "document") is fundamental. Wolff does not always, to be sure, accept Wellhausen's ascription of a text, but he always begins with Wellhausen's question. And the assignment of a text to a strand of tradition sets the provisional limits of interpretation. While Wolff is here not interested in the oral stage of the text he is directly informed by Gunkel's sociological precepts. Clearly texts do not exist in a vacuum, they belong to a social setting. Texts are always only a part of the speaking and listening of social interaction.

More than to any other, Wolff looks to von Rad for his approach. Out of von Rad's study of the credo has come the fresh interest among Old Testament studies in the kerygmatic question. Because von Rad has shown that texts are refashioned by the credo and do not have their original meaning, the question of the faith confessed by Israel is the primary one to put to each text.

This decision about what question to put to the text (which is shared by von Rad and Wolff) is important hermeneutically, because it determines what the text is and what it is not. This decision makes certain questions legitimate and urgent, and conversely, at the outset excludes other questions entirely. To look into a text for kerygma implies that we have somewhere, in some text, a normative statement of faith by a confessing community. Thus von Rad and Wolff moved in the direction of Barth in insisting that exegesis is *church* exegesis, not only in the sense that only the believing church

can read the Bible with understanding, but that only the church, a conscious community of faith, can be the shapers of the text. The text as we now have it, i.e., as canon, is the work of a confessing community, and exegesis consists chiefly in ascertaining what that community meant to confess.

This decision means that Wolff and von Rad have rejected many concerns as of no interest to them. Most especially they have no primary interest in questions of history, posed either in Wellhausen's negative or Albright's positive way. They have no central interest in the pre-written stage which Gunkel handled so suggestively. Nor any central interest in the notion of the development of Israel's religion, a concern central to Wellhausen and a concern which it preoccupied Albright to refute. And finally, they have no real interest in the relations of the Bible to ancient Near Eastern texts or contexts as Albright has stressed them.

Indeed, it is not enough to say they have no interest in these matters. It is more accurate to say, according to their hermeneutic decision, that the text itself, by its nature as confession, makes such questions illegitimate. It is the text and not the interpreter which precludes such questions. Questions of history or of religious development can be asked, but they cannot be answered from the text without missing its point. The Bible, and especially the Hexateuch, is not a collection of interesting stories about the religious convictions or practices of just anybody. Rather it is a normative statement created by Israel's best theologians to give expression to what everyone ought to believe—which means not what they always do believe, but what they agree is the measure of authentic faith.

Wolff's scholarship, as he acknowledges[1], is dependent on the work of both Wellhausen and Gunkel, and he has a concern also for what in the text is true to historical fact, a question raised by Albright. His historical interest is clear in his hermeneutical essays which insist that exegesis must be in historical terms. But it is important for our purposes to see that Wolff's approach is most directly linked to von Rad. And to see what Wolff intends in these essays, it is necessary to see the frame of reference in which his presuppositions were shaped.

Von Rad's fundamental work on the Pentateuch and Wolff's formative scholarly years were in the 1930s, when profound questions of faith were alive in the German church. In the middle thirties, under the impact of Barth's articulations, there was formed the Confessing Church—evangelical Christians who for the sake of the gospel rejected the theological claims of the National Socialist movement[2]. In its most dramatic act, the Confessing Church issued the Barmen Declaration, a drastic repudiation of the "German Christians" who accommodated Hitler and found no conflict between church and culture. Many German Churchmen in that period, especially pastors, stood boldly for the gospel and risked much, and some paid much. The best known of course is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. But both von Rad and Wolff also figured among that faithful company. It takes little imagination to see what such a decision would do to exegesis. Scriptural study took on new urgency. There was no occasion for pedantic interest. Now there was pressing, desperate need to hear the Word of God in the text, for the Confessing Church had learned that only in that could they find adequate resources.

It is precisely this concern to hear the Word in the text which established von Rad's program of study, and radically changed the direction of scholarship. Critical questions were rerouted "from the aesthetic-archaic sphere (Gunkel) into the realm of Old Testament Credenda and their tradition history."[3] The question posed by von Rad is: "What is the kerygmatic objective in the sources to which the credo has given order and intention to the narrative?"[4] The location of *kerygmatic objective* in the text was a burning issue for the Confessing Church, and it led both von Rad and Wolff to see every text as a confessional statement.

Thus Wolff's essays here assume that the church did not for the first time acquire a confessional stance in Germany in the 1930s. Rather, in its faithful times the church, of course including Israel, has always been a confessing church, i.e., has always held to a confession which protested against and called into question dominant cultural values. The task of exegesis then is to locate in any given text the confessing stance of the faithful community—a stance which will be both protest and affirmation. That confessional stance is found in a peculiar kerygmatic formulation which announces the

end of an old order, now rejected, and gives the "news" of a new order reflecting Yahweh's purpose and power.

It is appropriate to note the appeal of Wolff's work now in the 1970s. Surely the essays bear more than scholarly or academic interest. The conservative turn in church life, the unexpected discernment of the gospel by the young, the return to Scripture as a response to a situation of confusion and displacement—all of this suggests a need to locate a credo, to live from a kerygmatic affirmation. There are many signs today that the church is moving toward a new confessional mood, not in the sense of prideful rigidity, but in the sense of the Germans at Barmen, staking out a theological position which is beyond negotiation, a position which protests against and calls dominant cultural values into question. Wolff's essays suggest that as such a development happens, the church is faithful heir to other generations who enunciated kerygma and presumably kept a faithful confession.

Thus Wolff shares with von Rad two important presuppositions: (1) that in the text we do not have simply a collection of interesting stories; we have confessions of faith which have been refashioned to bear meanings not originally intended[5]—that is, we have full texts, filled with the best faith of the church; and (2) that the confession made in a text is not a timeless statement but always has relation to a given historical crisis. Confessions of the community of faith are of enduring interest to the church, but in a primary way they are tracts for the time, and must be understood first in that context. It is not too much to say with reference to von Rad and Wolff that the faithful church lives always from one Barmen to another Barmen. There is more than a little evidence that the church in contemporary America is invited to such an embrace of Scripture again.

The four basic documents of the Pentateuch, JEDP, (generally agreed upon by scholars since the middle of the last century) are not simply literary creations and surely not scissors-and-paste jobs as they have sometimes been presented. Rather they are four major efforts to make a confession of faith in a crisis. We may briefly consider them in turn.

The Yahwist's narrative, as is now generally agreed, was an

effort to express faith during the united monarchy under David and Solomon[6]. That period of Israelite history (1000–922), which von Rad has aptly termed "Israel's enlightenment," was a time of economic upheaval and secularization in which strivings for power and prosperity teetered Israel's self-concept as a people of faith. The J tradition, as Wolff suggests, is both critique and apologia for the monarchy. It is critique because it excoriates hubris, exposes self-seeking, and denounces any ultimate concern for the monarchy. That monarchy, it reminds, exists not for purposes of its own but only to bear a blessing. But at the same time, J is an apologia for the dynasty, linking David to Abraham, and making the case that that particular dynasty is the chosen bearer of blessing to a world victimized by curse. Thus the J tradition represents a very early but very sophisticated statement about power and faith, about trust in God and confidence in human resource. It concerns the always ambiguous balance of political reality and faithful vision.

Who can say of J that it is not high theology? Or who can say that it is not fervent political propaganda for the king? But that is the nature of faith in history. Faith must take account of the reality of power and make its claim there, if it is to make it at all. The Yahwist, working under what must have been the careful surveillance of the throne, discerned in Israel's oldest memories the elements of a new self-awareness: Israel existed not for herself but for a blessing. Into a situation of comfortable self-satisfaction in the tenth century stepped one of the Bible's most powerful detonators of mission. As Wolff has discerned, J made a remarkable ecclesiological statement, about power and purpose at one, about religious insight and political fact in instant and effective tension.

The Elohist tradition has posed some of the most difficult questions for Pentateuchal study. It is not at all clear that "E" in fact existed as an independent tradition, and even if it did, it appears to be completely in the shadow of J. Wolff has accomplished a singular achievement by (a) identifying its theological core, and (b) relating that core effectively to a historical religious crisis. He begins, as he does elsewhere, with a search for E's distinctive message (*Verkündigungsabsicht*). The translation of this word as "message" is perhaps too weak, for by it Wolff means the point of the proc-

lamation, the command to act. That kerygmatic point Wolff finds in the call to "fear God," a phrase he regards as a ukase forbiddance of loyalty to any other gods. The crisis which such a kerygma addressed, Wolff says, was syncretism, in the time of Elijah. Syncretism then and now is the accommodation of faith to alternative faiths in open tolerance. As elsewhere, Wolff is able to show that kerygmatic intent and cultural nexus belong together and illumine each other. The Elohist affirmation of radical loyalty to Yahweh is not an eternal call to faith, but a message of localized urging, for a time when accommodation was attractive, easy, and widespread.

More than anywhere else, Wolff broke new ground in treating E. He did not change the dating or historical setting of E generally accepted by scholars. He agreed with the consensus that E is a northern tradition dating probably from the ninth century. But he has taken that ninth-century northern setting seriously and found in it the clue to the narrative's real target—syncretism. Second, although Wolff has not solved all of the literary problems—recognizing as he does that the issues are difficult and the evidence fragmentary—he has nevertheless not allowed the insolubles to forestall his argument. He has been content to accept what data there are. And third, with this data and his supposition of syncretism, he has put his question of kerygmatic intent, and has been able to see an enormous new power in the text. It is this third component, the question of the kerygmatic intent of the text, which is peculiar to Wolff's work and the one obviously most important. It is Wolff's conviction that the text is confessional. That conviction both gives his handling of the text legitimacy and necessitates his critical presuppositions. And in each of his essays, Wolff's clear and distinctive hermeneutical presuppositions are just below the surface—indeed, to convey those presuppositions is the essay's purpose[7].

In his discussion of Deuteronomic history, Wolff builds upon the work of von Rad and more especially on Martin Noth.

The "Deuteronomic historical work" (DtrH) refers to the corpus of material combining large sections of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, together with Deuteronomy 1-4 and parts of 31-34. The material of Deuteronomy 5-28 ("Deuteronomy") is

thought to be considerably older—probably some form of the scroll found in the temple in 621 (2 Kings 22-23). The DtrH is derivative of the material in Deuteronomy, and is dated subsequently, perhaps before 609 as Cross has again argued recently, and certainly, in part at least, around 561 as Noth argued and Wolff assumes. The relation of Deutoronomy and DtrH is that of an older covenant tradition being used to control a subsequent, more extended retelling and redefining of Israel's history.

But Wolff rejects the theological conclusions about the DtrH of both Noth and von Rad. Noth had concluded that the DtrH simply described or even announced the end of Israel's sacral history. But this is unconvincing to Wolff because one would scarcely prepare such a long statement only to make an obvious, negative point. On the other hand von Rad had offered a most imaginative suggestion: the tension of Mosaic judgment and Davidic hope produced an announcement of a new history of promise. Such a conclusion, Wolff contends, places more freight on 2 Kings 25:27-30 than it can bear. The allusions to the Davidic promise are either absent or much too subdued to permit such a positive construction. Most subsequent study has sided either with the negative conclusion of Noth or with the positive one of von Rad. But Wolff's essay refuses either. He asks afresh about the intended affirmation[8] or proclamation[9], which neither Noth nor von Rad has discerned. And as he was later to do in other essays, Wolff locates this in a particular formulary speech pattern, one which marks the turns in the historical narrative. Specifically, he finds the kerygma[10] in the call to repentance and return, contained in the term *shûb*.

His conclusion rejects Noth's negative point by affirming that history is not ended and the future is not closed off. Thus he overcomes Noth's difficulty of explaining why such an immense narrative was written simply to end a short one. And on the other side, against von Rad, Wolff assigns first priority to the Mosaic demands for obedience: the priority is unmistakable in the text, but von Rad had to subordinate it in his overvaluing of the royal tradition of promise. Thus the kerygma of *shûb* is a neatly balanced statement of future possibility and rigorous present demand. In addition it meets the most crucial criterion: it is obvious in the text. Wolff's con-

clusion is derived from the text, utilizing the best critical opinion but refusing to impose some rigid theoretical construction on the obvious meaning. Subsequent discussions, which are numerous[11], have not advanced greatly beyond his statement. It will be useful to take Wolff's statement up, and compare this kerygma of the DtrH with that of the concurrent exile literature.

The fourth essay in this collection, by Brueggemann, treats the Priestly tradition along the lines laid down by Wolff. Concerning P, the critical questions are generally agreed to be ones pertaining to style, extent of literature, dating (to the exile), and, to a degree, theological tendencies. No one, however, has asked the question characteristic of Wolff, namely, what is the repeated formula which gives a clue to the kerygmatic thrust? In *The Old Testament: A Guide to its Writings*[12] Wolff has suggested what approach he would take if he did treat P. He stresses particularly the covenant formula "I will be your God—you shall be my people." This formula is one through which the displaced people of the exilic period are given an assurance of identity and of belonging to Yahweh. That formula provides a way for Wolff to understand both the DtrH and P, which are roughly contemporary. Both traditions are informed by the covenant formula. But each carries its own emphasis. The Priestly tradition, hoping chiefly to give assurance in the midst of displacement, stresses the first part, "I will be your God" (cf. Gen. 17:7, 8; Ex. 29: 45-46). Conversely the DtrH, with its call to repentance and its demand for obedience, stresses, "You shall be my people," i.e., you shall keep the Torah.

The central question for interpretation of the Priestly document has long been the relation of the narrative and legal parts, both of which are treated as P[13]. The problem of relating the two is very old. To the great literary critics of the nineteenth century it remained a difficulty, until they convincingly assigned both parts to the same literary source. But as regards the kerygmatic intent, the problem is still unsolved. Given our present understanding of P, pursuit of Wolff's method would seem to require opting in one direction or the other, either for narrative or for legal material. Thus Claus Westermann, Wolff's colleague in Heidelberg, opts for the legal, stressing the motif of glory as the focus of P[14]; but such a

focus tends to be limited to a few texts. Wolff himself has not published any extensive study, but in conversations he intimates that the central motif is God among his people, especially emphasizing the "tent of meeting." Hence his brief statement stressing, "I will be your God."

The present essay by Brueggemann goes in the opposite direction, seeking P's kerygmatic intention in the narrative material. The study is most informed by the work of Elliger[15] but seeks to be faithful to Wolff's method in (a) locating the formula dominating the texts, and (b) seeing that formula in relation to the cultural crisis obtaining when the tradition took canonical form. This has led to a focus on the phrase, "be fruitful and multiply, fill the land, subdue it and have dominion." By using the old conquest language, the P tradition gives assurance to the exiled community that land is still its destiny according to Yahweh's promises. Thus P is a kerygmatic affirmation, wielding old traditions against the pain of exile. It affirms that God has not forgotten his promises and therefore Israel's history has not ended. Wolff, in his brief discussion, pays particular attention to the report of Moses' death in Deuteronomy 34, wherein Moses sees the land but may not enter it. It is important to note that Deuteronomy 34, as the close to the Pentateuch, ends with a statement about entrance (reentrance?) into the land of promise, which both assures entry to Israel but subtly insists on a delay before entering, i.e., or waiting for the next generation. Such a two-sided statement supports the proposed kerygmatic conclusion of Brueggemann, that P promises land but does not deny the reality of landlessness in exile. Thus, much more vigorously and unreservedly than his contemporary DtrH, P directs Israel to a new future[16].

Wolff responded (orally) to Brueggemann's essay—saying its emphasis was different from what his would have been. Wolff would have argued from the legal material, Brueggemann sided with the narrative. Wolff does concede, however, that Brueggemann's discussion is faithful to his own method and pursues that method to a conclusion Wolff regards as legitimate, though not the one he himself would draw. Hopefully Wolff's own argument will be forthcoming, either to correct or supplement the present essay. In oral communication, Wolff has said he would "supplement" it, which perhaps

is an admission that statements about both parts—narrative and legal—must be made if we are ever to discern a unified kerygma.

These four essays urge an important hermeneutical conclusion. The Pentateuch (and DtrH) contain four major literary efforts (JEDP) in three profound crises. Each literary effect propounds a kerygma—a reformulation of faith and a call—appropriate to its crisis. To chasten the pride and prosperity of the united monarchy, J recalled to its notice that "by you the families of the earth will be blessed." To loosen Israel from the quicksand of Canaanite syncretism, E extolled her, "fear God." And to summon her in exile, DtrH admonished, "return," while P, to encourage, told her to "be fruitful and multiply, fill the land, subdue it and have dominion." In each case the node is Israel's fundamental confession of faith in the God of promise and deliverance. In each case the fresh statements are made by a simple reworking of old records, legends, legal materials, and stories. If the documentary hypothesis is to be an effective tool of exegesis, as is here maintained, then the node of meaning is to be found at the precise moment when the old material is claimed by the faithful and addressed to the crisis at hand. Wolff's hermeneutic tries to show in every text Israel's struggle to keep its faith and yet seriously respond to its cultural context. Any other approach, he felt, would bleach the text of its intentional message.

Wolff's hermeneutic draws the interpreter into the circle where something decisive is happening. The meeting between the text and our own time hopefully can be a contest of great moment. And that, obviously, is the intent of Wolff's hermeneutic. That meeting may be an announcement of good news, a declaration of judgment upon us, or a warning which calls to repentance.

But it will be none of these unless the interpreter can see the dynamic in the text itself, that these are texts in the process of transformation, by the gospel (the credo), into something they were not. Such texts often consist of old stories and memories which were at home in their context, valued as a part of the natural furniture of the scene.

But the texts were refashioned as they were transmitted in the ancient community. Sagas became kerygma. Legends became

gospel announcements, warnings, judgments, and promises. And in the process of becoming what they were not, the texts shifted vis-à-vis their congenial context. They are no longer comfortable in the scene. They are not just another component in the settled religion or folk heritage of the time. Now they are words from the outside which call the whole comfortable scene into question.

Thus the safely secularized person in the tenth century (the time of the Yahwist) might relish an old story about a man sleeping and having a dream about a ladder to heaven (Gen. 28:10-22). He might enjoy its simplicity and its oddity. And he might be reassured by the vague religious feeling that it is good to have entry to heaven, though perhaps not by so graphic an ascent. Most of all he might rejoice that the text in no way touched him, addressed him, or called him into question. But in the midst of that story, by the transforming power of the Yahwist's kerygma, he would notice the text had shifted. It was no longer safely remote, and amusingly unbelievable. It was how a compelling announcement (vss. 13-15), that *by you,* by Israel, life for all would have to be blessed. His place was no longer outside; he was called into the text. The story wasn't just about idyllic ladders or a remote sacral mountain believed in only in the olden days. Now the text was about *his* (the secular, tenth-century person's) place in life, the promise he had and the mission he had to undertake. The text penetrated his secular environment and he found himself addressed by a holy call which took him seriously and expected him to take his world seriously.

Such handling of Genesis 28:10-22 is the method these essays suggest[17]. In the tenth or in the sixth century, as in our time, there were undoubtedly people who preferred diverting, remote texts. But our hermeneutic suggests that the transforming process was powerful and persistent; and that whoever uses this approach will be drawn into the text's insistence on change. The interpreter, too, will be called upon to become what he never was before.

3

THE KERYGMA OF THE YAHWIST[1]

by Hans Walter Wolff

Translated by Wilbur A. Benware

The task of recognizing anew the relationship of the Testaments to one another is a special challenge for today's exegesis, and it involves the exegesis of both Testaments. The task cannot be accomplished from the viewpoint of the New Testament alone.

The fact that in the New Testament the Old is cited at every turn, either directly or indirectly, at first hinders the task more than it helps. The Old Testament writings are encountered widely by the New Testament interpreter in the form of atomized quotations, which to our historical sense do not really support what they are called upon to. Or one finds historical reconstructions, make from some simple series in the Old Testament, which are by no means historically verifiable for us in the same way. This difficulty[2] which results from the ancients' manner of dealing with texts, makes it well-nigh impossible to make the relationship of the Testaments comprehensible by using only Old Testament documents as they are seen though New Testament eyes.

Nonetheless, the New Testament's recourse to these documents is not only frequent it seems to be indispensable[3]. Even in the Gospel of John people refuse to accept who Jesus of Nazareth is except upon testimony of the "Scriptures."[4] That in Jesus the righteousness of God comes to light in quite a new way cannot be explained without adding "the Law and the Prophets."[5] What takes place in "faith" must in some sense parallel what happened to the Patriarchs of Israel if it is to keep to the narrow path between fanaticism and dead orthodoxy[6]. Without the Old Testament, who Jesus is apparently remains completely hidden. The same is true for what is given in him as gift and also the knowledge of how man is to be rightly

related to him. Whether and why the reference of the New Testament to the Old is unavoidable will have to be put to the test afresh when we study the New Testament, but we ought to keep the question in mind now as we study the Old. In order to understand the New Testament witnesses we of course must take into account their ancient method of viewing texts. But first, in order to understand fully what it is to which the New Testament bears witness, we will have to recognize the Old Testament anew, in its own function as a witness, and the pertinence of that to our times.

And so, we begin by trying to understand the Old Testament *kerygmata* in their historical contexts[7], primarily the great literary works in which the proclamation of ancient Israel was compiled as "Scripture" to accompany Israel permanently. Simple analysis of language[8], even when supplemented by inquiry into the Old Testament world of ideas and literary conventions, will not give us the key to Old Testament intents. To find those intents we must take a different approach, concerned as much with the externals—like historical context and literary forebears—as with the internals of the texts; and once we have isolated the old Testaments intents, we may relate them to those of the New. As an example, let us choose the Yahwist's material, which is the basic, supporting stratum of the Pentateuch. Here we have before us, in magnificent style, the oldest literary composition of the oldest traditions in Israel. It has determined to a great extent the outline and theme of the present-day Pentateuch, the Torah, as the basic canon. "It may be said without exaggeration that, of all that the Pentateuchal narrative sets forth, it contains what is of greatest moment theologically."[9]

I

In order to determine the message of the Yahwist, a few preliminary questions need to be clarified.

1. What is the extent of the literary corpus? We will proceed from a critically assured minimum. Following the example of others[10] Gustav Hölscher[11] thought he could trace the Yahwist beyond the Pentateuch, through the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, as far as 1 Kings 12:19—that is, as far as the crumbling of the Davidic kingdom after the death of Solomon. However, not

only does the disparateness of the materials which have been assimilated and the linguistic usage of each resist the view of a unified Yahwistic Enneateuch, but there is, above all, an impossible diversity in the way pieces of material are linked together in the various parts[12]. The latter is true even of Joshua[13]. To be sure, Gerhard von Rad prefers to maintain a Hexateuch, because he sees the conquest tradition as the "basic scaffold" which supports the whole of the Yahwistic work[14]. Certainly a close connection with the exodus and conquest traditions will have to be assumed for the Yahwist[15], but our question about his real intent will demonstrate his striking lack of interest in the conquest[16]. For this reason we must accept Noth's compelling literary-critical proposals about the Book of Joshua; and from here on instead of the Hexateuch we will speak in terms of the Tetrateuch as the realm of the Yahwist's work. This means that the Yahwist's last large complex is the Balaam narrative, to which belongs Numbers 25:1-5, the brief passage concerning Israel's apostasy to Baal Peor.

Whether a few additional sentences in Numbers 32:1, 16, 39-42[17] should be ascribed to him or not depends also on the question of just how much interest in the conquest tradition the Yahwist has and whether the conclusion of his work is, therefore, viewed as fragmentary[18]. His main interest, in any case (as will be demonstrated in what follows), ends with the Balaam narrative in Numbers 22 and 24. Prior to this and a few other passages from the conquest tradition, he treats the Sinai tradition, with surprising brevity. On the other hand, the narratives of the exodus from Egypt and, above all, the patriarchal narratives are given a much more extensive form. Quite distinctive pictures of human history preface the whole. Thus the object of our investigation is the material in the Tetrateuch from Genesis 2:4*b* to Numbers 25:5, which nowadays is generally held by literary critics to be Yahwistic.

2. What historical situation does the Yahwist address? If, indeed, he does proclaim a kerygma, it will be important to clarify just what circle of readers his work is aimed at. Two considerations will serve initially in drawing rough limits. The various traditions of the Israelite tribes have long since grown together into a complete unity. The Sinai tradition of the southern tribes is connected with

the exodus tradition of the Joseph tribes; the God of the Fathers is identical with Yahweh, the God of Israel, and is unhesitatingly so named; the originally varied patriarchal traditions, with their diffuse centers of tradition, have long since become the common property of all the tribes[19]. Coalescence of the traditions to such an extent is conceivable, at the earliest, toward the end of the premonarchical period. On the other hand, there is nowhere any evidence of conflict between two Israelite states such as occurred after Solomon's death. Thus the period we have in view is generally that of David's and Solomon's empire[20].

This becomes clearer when the historical scope of the work is defined. If one asks which peoples besides Israel the narrator is interested in, the answer is the very peoples which, according to 2 Samuel 8, were annexed in the reign of David: the Philistines (Gen. 26:1-8; compare 10:14), the Moabites (Num. 22; 24:17) and Ammonites (Gen. 19:37-38), the Arameans (Gen. 24:10; 31:20), the Edomites (Gen. 25:23, 30; compare 27:39 f.; Num. 24:18), and the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8-16), in addition to the Canaanites, who were conquered and incorporated into David's empire (Gen. 9:25)[21]. The great kingdoms of Babylon and Egypt are, for the author, powers long since impotent (Gen. 11:7 ff.; Ex. 14:13). At no time except during the reigns of David and Solomon does this political outlook obtain.

To be sure, one prefers to think of Solomon's era rather than David's. The high literary culture which the Yahwist shows suggests it. One finds precisely this kind of culture in the throne-succession narrative from Solomon's time. Moreover, there is the broad scope of international development, reflected in the Yahwist's enumeration of peoples in Genesis 10:8-19, 21, 25-30[22], and, finally, "the almost completely cultless atmosphere" which seems "like a breath of air from the freethinking era of Solomon."[23] A concrete allusion to Solomon's time can be seen in the saying of Isaac concerning Esau, in Genesis 27:39 f., where the qualification in verse 40*b* looks like a postscript: ". . . but it will come to pass when you 'rebel' [?] . . . , you shall break his yoke from your neck." This is a glance at the Edomite prince, Hadad, who, according to 1 Kings 11:14-22 and

25*b*, rebelled and brought a part of the Edomite kingdom back under Edomite control[24].

Thus we must look, most probably, for the Yahwist and his readers in the period following David's death and preceding the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam, not too distant from courtly circles—in any case, in Judah. For in the Yahwist's Joseph-story, Judah is the firstborn and the spokesman (Gen. 37:26; 43:3; 44: 16-34); the Hebron-Mamre traditions are found only in the Yahwist; and the Jacob traditions of Bethel and Shechem are assigned by him (in Gen. 12:6, 8) also to Abraham, who belongs to the south[25]. The history of Judah itself comes into the foreground in Genesis 38.

Thus we presume that the Yahwist is in the vicinity of the Solomonic capital in times when, perhaps, the first crises of the empire were already appearing on the horizon. Nonetheless, as a whole, the feeling of security and superiority is even stronger than in David's days, being sustained by the growth of wealth through peaceful trade, and by great cultural access—from architectural monuments to proverbial wisdom and literary brilliance. What does the Yahwist have to say to the Israel of this time?

3. Before we can pursue that question we must explain how, in such a work, we can ascertain whether there is any kerygmatic intention (*Verkündigungswille*) peculiar to it, and how it may be found. And the question is an exacting one because the Yahwist is a faithful compiler who does very little editing of material transmitted to him.

Nonetheless, his own testimony is reflected in certain variants and additions, as far as these are apparent by comparison with parallel texts—primarily with the Elohist's. His viewpoint becomes even more distinct in the way he puts together material passed on to him, and the way he allots it weight: large blocks of preliterary tradition are sometimes represented profusely, such as the patriarchal tradition, and sometimes scantily, as with the Sinai tradition. Granted, there is no bulletproof evidence that this weighting is the Yahwist's, since we cannot know what was sacrificed by later editors who interlaced his work with the Elohist and still later with the Priestly document. Independent of this, however, is the design as a

whole and, above all, the state of the great introductory edifice, the so-called primal history (*Urgeschichte*), which is generally viewed as the Yahwist's own literary achievement[26]. This primal history is of extraordinary significance for determining his message, though most research up to now has succumbed to the danger of seeing it in isolation.

That the Yahwist, with his compiling, ordering, selecting, and enlarging of the tradition, means to proclaim a message first becomes undoubtedly clear in a few freely formulated insertions. He has inserted them at decisive transitions to illuminate the composition as a whole and to clarify the small variations in the tradition. Such highly persuasive bridge-passages can be discerned above all in Genesis 6:5-8; 8:21 f.; 12:1-4*a*; and 18:17-18, 22*b*-33[27]. The passage 12:1-3 is prominent among these from the very outset because it forms the transition from the history of man to the patriarchal history; 6:5 ff. and 8:21 f. only indirectly prepare for it; 18:17 ff. continues it[28].

In view of this evidence for his literary methodology, therefore, it will be advisable to begin the search for the kerygma of the Yahwist with 12:1-3. The composition as a whole, of course, must confirm and elucidate the kerygma; it must give evidence of being a complete and unified redaction.

II

We turn now to the text of Genesis 12:1-4*a*. After the Yahwist has acquainted his readers with Abraham's homeland, family, and above all with Sarai his childless wife in 11:28-30, he continues in 12:1-4*a*:

(1) And Yahweh spoke to Abram:
"Go from your land, from your kindred and from your father's house to the land which I will show you;
(2) Thus [29] I will make you a great people and bless you, and I will make your name great, so that [29] you will effect blessing [30].
(3) I will bless those who bless you, but whoever despises you, him will I curse. So, then [31], all the families of the earth can gain [32] a blessing in you."
(4) And Abram went, as Yahweh had told him; and Lot went with him.

This last sentence opens the door on the Abram-Lot saga cycle. It indicates with restraint, yet expressly, that everything which follows must be understood as deriving from the command of Yahweh in verses 1-3.

1. This command shows a clear arrangement which can be explicated initially by an analysis of its syntax. It opens with a single imperative (vs. 1), to which a long chain of consecutive clauses is added. Five times they have an imperfect-cohortative form (vss. 2-3*a*). Not until the last clause (vs. 3*b*) is a perfect tense employed. The brief command to depart introduces the passage. However, the accent obviously lies on the subsequent consecutive clauses, which five times hold out the prospect of a gracious act of Yahweh to the one addressed, hence having the character of a promise. The preceding imperative does not have any kind of conditional undertone, as if the promise of Yahweh depended on the obedience of Abraham. Rather, it sounds like a summons to receive the repeatedly promised gift. So then, according to verse 4*a*, Abraham "goes" without any "ifs" or "buts," apparently without even any indecision.

The predominance of the promise is clear. Still, at what does it really aim? We observed in the chain of promises a syntactical change in the last clause, verse 3*b*. Here the series of five imperfect-cohortative consecutive clauses is interrupted by a clause with a perfect consecutive. Thus, verse 3*b* is clearly set off as the sequel to the consequences (vss. 2-3*a*) of the departure of Abraham (vs. 1); it is the real result and it is, therefore, confirmed definitively by the perfect[33]. The abrupt change in the final clause is further clarified by the fact that in verse 3*b* the subject is no longer Yahweh but "all the families of the earth." Thus is set down decisively just whom Yahweh's action ultimately concerns and what this action is to accomplish for them. Thus the syntactical gradient of the long period hastens quite clearly to this concluding clause. It is the terse, concise *conclusio* of the whole.

If we are to be guided by the literary design, then the kerygma of the Yahwist's work appears in Genesis 12:1-4*a*, and syntactical analysis suggests that its most exact form is in 12:3*b*.

If we consider the content of the five previous imperative-cohortative clauses, then the movement toward verse 3*b* becomes

entirely clear. To begin with, the first three clauses contain promises to Abraham alone. The first clause promises that Yahweh will make him a great nation. The second adds that Yahweh will bless him—which may be a supplementary interpretation of the first clause, that is, Abraham's becoming a people is an effect of the blessing. Yet it is closer to the simple syntactical arrangement to regard the content of the third clause as the effect of the blessing, namely, the renown and superiority which the name of Abraham, who has become a people, will attain.

With the third clause, an initial high point is reached which, as such, was already prepared by the second. However, its real significance appears for the first time in the fact that a result clause or a clause of intention is added to the third statement of promise, with a change of subject: ". . . so that [or: in order that] you may become a blessing."[34] Like a preliminary announcement, the goal of the promised deeds of Yahweh sounds for the first time: he wills to make Abraham into a great and mightly people, so that they themselves may be a blessing. Yahweh's blessing for Abraham should have the result that Abraham himself effects blessing. How and for whom is not yet said.

Only the fourth and fifth clauses, which follow after this distinct caesura, form the transition whereby Yahweh announces his further deeds. They show that Yahweh's dealings toward Abraham and his people extend to their contemporaries. Those people, in their attitude to the people of Abraham, incur blessing or curse. Verse 3*aβ* stands in contrast as an exception, in the singular[35], so that the ones who are destined for blessing according to verse 2*b might* become the ones who are despised. It is assumed as the usual case (vs. 3*aα*) that those who are blessed by Yahweh are blessed by the surrounding world, too. Consequently, if verse 2 sets the goal of the Abrahamic blessing in that he himself will become a blessing, and if verse 3*a* adds that in this blessing the destiny of his contemporaries is decided by Yahweh, then the *conclusio* of verse 3*b* can do nothing less than make this magnificient offer: by acknowledging Abraham, all the families of the earth can gain blessing. The syntactical gradient observed above thus corresponds precisely to the movement of the

whole toward verse 3*b* as the *conclusio*: in the people of Abraham all humanity can gain blessing.

2. How does the Yahwist come to such a stupendous utterance? Does it have any support in the tradition he inherited? In his interpretation how does he deal with the *tradenda?* If we are to clarify the special, dominant concern of the Yahwist, we will have to study his key phrase in the light of tradition history.

If anything was given to him in the patriarchal tradition, it was, first of all, the promise of the land. For it is precisely because of that promise that the patriarchal tradition adhered to Canaanite sanctuaries. Evidently the Yahwist knew it as the Shechem or Bethel tradition (Gen. 12:6 f.; 28:19)[36]. It is just as certain that the connection of the patriarchal with the exodus-conquest tradition was already a given for him. Now to those passing on the tradition of conquest, the earlier, patriarchal tradition held interest only insofar as it contained the promise of land[37]. It is therefore quite surprising that this theme of the Promised Land, which was so decisive for the conquest tradition, and which the Yahwist was assuredly well aware of, has almost disappeared from the introductory words in Genesis 12:1-3. Land-promise appears only as a dim remembrance, in the subordinate clause of verse 1: "Go . . . to the land which I will show you." "Show!" this is hardly the solemn, spectacular offer of land as it appears in 12:7 or 28:13 in the traditional material, whose motto is "I give." The theme is reduced by the Yahwist almost to a footnote[38].

In preference, he takes up the promise of descendants. And apparently, the first promise in our passage, that Abraham should become a great people, proceeds from there. The Yahwist thus reaches back to perhaps the oldest, even pre-Palestinian, layer of the patriarchal tradition[39]. The source of that primeval child—promise, which is linked to the command to go, may be the ancient piece of tradition in Genesis 15:1 ff., which is not connected with any Palestinian cult site[40].

Even the principal catchword of our key passage, the word "blessing" in fivefold variation, is understandable only from this ancient element of promise. As surely as this word carries on the Yahwist's interpretation, it just as surely is not his invention, having

its origin in the promise of a son and descendants, respectively; compare 24:34-36; 26:24 (J); 22:17 (R^{JE}); 48:15 f. (E); 28:3 f. (P). Never is land the earnest of the "blessing"; land, rather, is simply something Yahweh has unconditionally promised, on his "oath"[41]: Genesis 24:7; 26:3; Numbers 11:12 (J); Genesis 50:24 (E). For this reason the promise of blessing in 12:2*a* is placed immediately after the promise of becoming a people. The result of Yahweh's "blessing" is not land, but a beneficial, abundant vitality. "Blessing is power for life, intensification of life, accumulation of life; it expresses itself concretely as fertility which makes the soil productive, the herds numerous, and the community strong, populous, and respected."[42] Thus the promise of blessing leads naturally from the promise of increase to the promise of a great name. The blessing produces both.

Making these connections the Yahwist's interpretation of the tradition distinctively begins. If, in the family structure of the ancients, blessing was understood as an immediately effective and powerful word (see Gen. 24:34-36), then here (attached to the *promise* of increase) it is *promised* to future ages. "Blessing" becomes the linchpin word (*Deutewort*) in the great history of Israel from Abraham's setting out to David's empire. And though, in the Yahwist's key passage God does not directly promise a "son" or "descendants" to Abraham (13:16 [J]; 15:5; 21:12 [E]) as the effect of the blessing (as in 24:36; 15:4; and 18:10), he does promise "a great people" and "a great name," which were the effects, in the Yahwist's time, of precisely Abraham's "sons." If what has been observed frequently is correct, that 12:2*a* speaks of the "great name" of Abraham as a gift of Yahweh in contrast to the self-made "name" of the builders of the Tower in Genesis 11:4, it is because this gift has taken on, in the meantime, concrete shape in the "great name" (2 Sam. 7:9) of David and in Israel's fame, which was promised.

Now *pre*monarchical Israel understood the conquest as Yahweh's act to fulfill the promise of land made in the patriarchal tradition. This was a bold reinterpretation, but one congruent with Yahweh's acts. In the same way, in the era of David and Solomon's empire, the Yahwist reaches a no less bold—but also no less con-

gruent—reinterpretation: that the great people and the great and matchless name must be recognized as the effect of Yahweh's blessing. He does this by singling out from the whole of the patriarchal tradition only one element—the promise of descendants. The old stories afford understanding of the new history; that is, Yahweh's new acts in history reinterpret the fullness of the old stories, which had simply never been viewed in such a way before.

Even if verse 2*a* is viewed as congruent with tradition, its continuation raises difficulties. Where does the consecutive clause (2*b*), "you shall be a blessing," and, all the more, its ultimate interpretation in the *conclusio,* "all the families of the earth shall gain a blessing in you," have any support in tradition? Certainly not in the patriarchal tradition. There is only the catchword "blessing," which we saw was rooted in the promise of descendants. But in verse 2*b,* if not in 2*a,* that word is being doubly modified: on the one hand, the one who is blessed is now, himself, to effect blessing; on the other, he is placed in relation to all the families of the earth. This means, in sum, that the received catchword becomes the key word for Israel's relation to the peoples of the earth and for their relation to Israel.

With this, the Yahwist expresses his view on a problem which first became pressing with the formation of the empire. This point of view was not exactly a matter of course in influential circles; theirs was rather the consciousness of triumph and flush of superiority after all the trouble Israel had had from her neighbors in former years. The crises that begin in Solomon's day show the continuation of unrest among the subject peoples. From the Yahwist's key passage comes this question: Have the people of Abraham as yet brought about the blessing for them? Have the peoples found blessing in Israel? Does the "great nation," with its "great name," correspond to the proclaimed will of Yahweh?

Where does the Yahwist get his authority for such questions? Is there entrusted to him a completely new kerygma which he is capable of connecting only loosely with the old patriarchal tradition? We can trace only by way of allusion what it is that supports him. For instance, there is the ancient wish-saying that the descendants might "possess the gate of their enemies," which is taken up

secondarily in Yahweh's promise in 22:17. (The editorial addition in Genesis 22:15-18—namely, 17*b*–18—likens it very closely to 12:3*b* of our passage.) Genesis 24:60 shows that the Yahwist knows this ancient wish-saying from the traditions. It leads beyond the promise of descendants, with which it is joined in Genesis 24:60, since it considers their relation to the surrounding world; yet it covers, basically, only the promise of preeminence (12:2*aβ*)[43]—not the decisive catchword "blessing" in relation to the surrounding world.

The word turns up again in verse 3*a*, which has not yet been considered:

> "I will bless those who bless you,
> But whoever despises you, him will I curse."

It is this saying in fact that provoked the question whether there is not here "a cult-word in elevated style."[44] Certainly, the Yahwist takes this saying from tradition; but he selected it carefully, to introduce his unique and principal declaration in verse 3*b*. And he uses the saying two more times—once at the conclusion of Isaac's blessing on Jacob (Gen. 27:29*b*):

> "Those who curse you, let them be cursed,
> But those who bless you, let them be blessed!"

And it also appears at the end of the first Balaam saying in Numbers 24:9*b*, where, aside from the fact that here the word of blessing comes first, it has exactly the same form. How familiar this word is to our narrator is also evident in his use of it in free variation in the Balaam story in Numbers 22:6*b*.

The Yahwist takes this saying as his point of departure. But his reformulation of it in the key passage shows that he wishes to carry it further. Besides, the fact that the word of blessing in Numbers 24:9*b* is placed first, contrary to Genesis 27:29*b*—and the fact that the parallel sentences are altered to make a chiasmus—changes the saying in three ways. The word of curse or blessing, formed in the cult and spoken by man, becomes the word of promise, spoken by God: "I will bless!" "I will curse!" It is thus added to the string of promises which begins with verse 2*a*. Secondly, the pronouncement

is more sweeping and severe: instead of "those who curse you," it reads, "whoever despises you." Perhaps even the placement of *'rr* by *qll* (*Piel*) implies that not the one who uses the formula *'ārûr* against Israel has Yahweh's curse fall on him, but rather anyone who regards Israel, as God's people, as mean and contemptible[45]. This can be freely paraphrased as "I will curse the one who does not treat you as blessed." Finally, the singular is surprising[46]. The slanderer is considered the exception. Evidently, the Yahwist consciously modified the strict parallelism of the traditional cult word. The emphasis falls on the blessing, something not at all unexpected after verse 2*b*. Thus in verse 3*a* the Yahwist has covered and prepared his concluding sentence by means of the tradition. Analysis of tradition history thus emphasizes the clarity of the concluding sentence and its accentuated one-sidedness, showing that the history writer, as a witness, really wants to culminate with this very utterance: ". . . all the families of the earth can gain a blessing in you." Even though the Yahwist says he is only testifying to the will of God, which has always been proclaimed in Israel, we still have no proof that it was ever expressed this way before.

3. Our text is the key word in the transition from the history of humanity to the history of Israel. Along with the literary methodology of the Yahwist, its peculiarity lies in the fact that it is interpreted by the compilation of pieces of tradition in their context and by their peculiar wording. It is well known that 12:1-3 is not only the "conclusion of the primal history" (*Urgeschichte*), "but the real key for it."[47] This accords with the fact that 12:1-3, with its peculiar stress, can only be understood together with Genesis 1-11. If read following Chapters 2-11, it patently confirms what its own inner arrangement as well as the history of tradition has shown, namely, that the decisive word is first brought by 12:3*b*.

The so-called primal history explains beforehand why all the families of the earth need the blessing. This is disclosed in retrospect by 12:3*b* as its hidden, leading question (*Leitfrage*). This can be summarized briefly here because the material is well known and the lines have been drawn often. With various sorts of material from tradition, the Yahwist shows persistently that his attention is fixed on all humanity, on the life of man himself (Chs. 2-3), on his

family and work, accords and conflicts, on his cultural and social deeds (Ch. 4), and on all the branches of the giant tree of man as far as they are known to his geography (Ch. 10), on the nations of the world in their hopeless dissension caused by anxiety and arrogance (11:1-9). "All the families of the earth"—this subject of his message in 12:3*b* is introduced in Chapters 2-11.

Of course, the reader knows precisely what humanity lacks. The word for blessing, which has five distinct variations in the key passage (*Leitsatz*), does not occur in the Yahwist's history of man. (The formula *bārûk YHWH* in Genesis 9:26*b* is not an exception because it is not a case of blessing for man.) Instead, the root *'rr* appears five times: 3:14, 17; 4:11; 9:25 and 5:29 (in a reference back to 3:17). After the curse has first been brought to bear on the Serpent and the Garden, it falls on Cain and Canaan, illustrative of men who are fathers of nations. Particularly in the paraphrase of the old saga about Noah, the first vinedresser, and in the grafting of the accursed name of Canaan onto the name of Ham (see 9:18, 22, 25), it becomes clear that segments of the subjected population who live in the empire as "servant[s] of the servants" have been introduced to point a moral. Curse destroys freedom: it expels man from a fruitful life (4:11) and thrusts him into aimless wandering and a fear of death (4:13). The word about the Serpent already shows how the curse brings complete degradation—bondage to the dust and exclusion from the community of the free (3:14); curse yields the land to thorns and thistles, widens infertility, and thereby forces man to vain and agonizing labor (3:17).

By a connecting genealogy. all these curse stories are linked together in historical order with ones which, lacking the catchword, deal with the same subject. The peculiarity here is that the curse must never totally destroy until the end; it is limited, so that man does not die but can continue to live for a goal yet unnamed[48]. There is even a comforter in the midst of the toil and pain of life under the curse, found in the fifth *'rr* passage (5:29)[49]. Besides the five *'rr* references, there is a sixth which speaks of the curse, using the word *qll* (*Piel*) which now, however, is negated (8:21). Yahweh speaks: "I will never again curse the ground because of man. . . ." Looking back at 3:17, this is like an advance notice of 12:3 in the negative[50],

and it indicates the Yahwist's understanding of history: with man, nothing ever remains as it was; he faces real and great changes.

Not to curse the evil man does is not yet to bless him. But what to "gain blessing" means in 12:3 has already been prepared for somewhat, although in the negative, by the words of the curse: to enter a free and fruitful life, to come out of bondage, out of vain striving and aimless wandering, out of hubris and fear of death. And from the Babel story there is added, as an advance promise: to get over the inability of peoples to understand and act in concert.

These brief reminders of what is well known suffice to show how the narratives which precede 12:1-3 confirm that the first message of the Yahwist may be seen in 12:3*b*.

But does this passage express the import of the *entire* work? This question has not yet been raised. To answer it we must look at the remainder of the Yahwist's work.

III

If our analysis of 12:1-3 and our emphasis on 12:3*b* in connection with Genesis 2-11 have been correct, then it must be possible to read everything which the Yahwist compiles and presents in what follows in terms of his thermatic question: How does the blessing come in Abraham to the peoples? How can they attain a free, productive life? Chapters 2:4*b*–12:3 have stated that all peoples are meant to have blessing and to what extent all peoples need it. But *how* all peoples are to find aid in life from Israel is something the Yahwist has yet to say; and this is the really essential matter for his audience in the Solomonic kingdom.

We may ask whether and how the Yahwist develops his theme in presenting the great complexes of tradition.

1. That he does pursue it further is apparent from the fact that twice more he grafts 12:3*b*, entire, onto the patriarchal tradition (18:18; 28:14). And it would also appear that the Yahwist enlarged the patriarchal tradition particularly because in it the meaning of 12:3*b* was carried out. The Yahwist's theme appears stressed for the first time in his shaping of the Mamre-Sodom narrative. On his departure from Mamre, Yahweh hesitates, wondering whether he can conceal from Abraham the judgment due on Sodom (18:

17)[51]. Why ought he not to do it? The answer is highly significant: "Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation in order that all the nations of the earth may gain a blessing in him" (vs. 18). The gradient corresponds exactly to 12:2-3. With the reference to "the great and mighty nation" the reader is drawn into the present; he will soon be likewise reminded that Sodom is of interest precisely because it was the cradle of the Moabites and Ammonites, who had been incorporated into the empire (19:37-38). The essential matter, which makes silence impossible for Yahweh, follows his remembering of the promise that Abraham should become a people: "In Abraham-Israel shall all peoples find salvation."

Following this literal introduction of his theme, the Yahwist discloses in the subsequent narrative for the first time *how* in Abraham-Israel the blessing can come to those who are threatened with death. His answer is: in the unflagging, intercessory activity of Abraham-Israel for those who are perishing. The symbolization of the narrative is clearly distinguished by the fact that, in 18:25, Yahweh is addressed as "Judge of all the earth." Thus, guilty Sodom stands as an example for "all the nations of the earth" (vs. 18*b*). How could blessing be evidenced? In the forgiveness of guilt (vs. 26) and in the cancelling of the decision to destroy (vss. 31, 32). At the time Abraham's intercession for Sodom could not succeed. The task laid down before the Israel of Solomon's time is all the clearer: Israel's commission does not consist in agreeing with the well-deserved judgment on her subjects or even in its execution, but in unabating, intercessory activity she should be intent on forgiveness and forbearance.

All the other Abraham pericopes are probably meant to be seen in the brilliant light of this Yahwistic passage, even if they originally intended to say something else and even if they continue to keep their own secondary function. So the Abraham-Lot narrative in Chapter 13 says that the one blessed becomes a blessing by giving his brother free choice of the land. The story of the endangering of the ancestress, on the other side, reveals the corresponding curse: by lying and passing off his wife as his sister, Abraham brings evil upon Egypt instead of blessing (12:10-20). That the broad significance of the Yahwist's theme was understood in later times

is shown by the redactional enlargement of the story about the sacrifice of Isaac in 22:15 ff., specifically, in the second proclamation of the angel. Here the question concerning the manner in which the blessing will be transmitted to the peoples is answered in the style of the Deuteronomist: ". . . because you have obeyed my voice." Verses 16-18 carry this out in narrative style: "Because you have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will multiply your descendants . . . and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth gain a blessing." This is a guide for understanding the spirit of the Yahwist's thought in passages that are not directly suggestive of the theme.

Nevertheless, we will adhere to the narratives which are interpreted by the Yahwist himself. His rendering of the Isaac tradition is a particularly telling example, especially because here we can compare the Elohist's parallels which tell of the covenant of Abraham with Abimelech in Beer-sheba (Chs. 20–21). In the Yahwist's account Abimelech is presented at once as "king of the Philistines" (26:1). Here appears Israel's old archenemy, from whom David finally took the reins of hegemony over Palestine (2 Sam. 8:1). In a theophany, Yahweh gives Isaac the commission to take up his residence in the land of the Philistines (Genesis 26:3). In a literary postscript in verses 4 and 5, the key theme of 12:3*b* is expressly invoked, in the same words as in 22:17 f.

Still, the Yahwist himself has interpreted his message with much more originality. Isaac-Israel neglects his commission among the nations, and out of his fear guilt is brought upon them (26:10). After the story of the disavowal of the ancestress (now Rebekah), applied to Abimelech as a contrast pericope, the Yahwist begins anew in 26:12 with his catchword: "Yahweh blessed him" by giving Isaac huge harvests in the land of the Philistines. Verse 13 continues, ". . . and the man became great, and gained more and more until he became very great." Thus the double catchword, "great," (see 12:2*a*) appears in the narrative anew as an interpretation of the blessing. This feature is then placed in relation to the Philistines: ". . . they envied him very much" (vs. 14*b*). Next comes the quarrel over wells, in which Philistines figure prominently (vss. 15–16), and the covenant with Abimelech. Along with his accomplices

Abimelech exclaims, in verse 28, "We see plainly that Yahweh is with you"; and after requesting a covenant he concludes, "You are now the blessed of Yahweh." Here the Yahwist comes right to the point: the nations necessarily move into relation to Isaac as one blessed by Yahweh.

How does he effect blessing? Here the answer is: by concluding a solemn covenant (*b^{e}rît*) with the Philistines in spite of their former hostility. In what way is the blessing worked out? *Shālôm* is established (vss. 29 and 31) in the promise to do one another no harm. Thus the Yahwist, recalling the pact with the Philistines, submits a second sermon to the Solomonic kingdom[52].

We hasten to the Jacob cycle. The Jacob-Esau cycle deserves only passing interest. It belongs to our subject insofar as the continuation of the blessing from one generation to the next becomes an important theme. For the possibility does arise among the brothers that one may lose it. We saw earlier that Isaac's blessing of Jacob in 27:27-29 is a distinct remembrance of 12:2-3, although it is formulated less freely. The strange plural forms, "your brothers" and "sons of your mother" in 27:29*aβ*, which are visibly stamped with the catchwords of the Yahwist's theme of "peoples" and "nations" in verse 29*aα*, nevertheless break the context of the Jacob-Esau story. In 28:14 the theme, formulated exactly like 12:3*b*, is repeated in the Yahwist's use of the Bethel narrative. In this the question of how to transmit blessing to the nations finds a further answer: in Israel's multiplying and expanding to the west, east, north, and south the point is reached where "by Jacob and his descendants"—this phrase is now added expressly—"all of the families of the earth may find blessing." Israel intermingles with the nations: this is the manner by which Yahweh himself brings about fulfillment of the blessing, even in the empire.

The subsequent Jacob-Laban cycle brings further illustrations. The Aramean Laban confesses to Jacob, in 30:27, "I have learned that Yahweh has blessed me because of you." In verse 30 Jacob takes up the catchword: "You had little before I came . . . and Yahweh has blessed you since I have been here." This time the blessing comes to the nations in the form of sheep: with his skill as a shepherd Jacob produces abundance among the Arameans. Beyond

this point the Yahwist gives free rein to the narration, with its multiplex tensions. Yet at the end there exists here, too, a covenant of peace between Jacob and Laban (31:51-52).

To summarize: the Yahwist expounds his kerygma through the patriarchal narrative. He deals with "all the families of the earth" using as examples the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Arameans. How are they to find blessing *in Israel?* By Israel's intercession with Yahweh on the example of Abraham; by readiness for peaceful agreement on the pattern of Isaac; by economic aid on the model of Jacob. Yahweh created the prerequisite by fulfilling the promise of increase and expansion. In what way is *blessing* found through all this? Blessing is found in annulment of guilt or punishment, in community life without strife, in effective material aid.

The Yahwist's theme has emerged so clearly in his use of the patriarchal tradition that it is easy to see what bearing it will give his use of other material. And in what follows he does not neglect to pursue his point.

2. The Joseph story is like a prelude to the exodus story. It is a capsule drama showing how, through the wisdom of one of the Patriarchs of Israel, blessing came even upon the powerful empire of Egypt. There is, to be sure, no direct use of 12:3*b* in the received Yahwistic text. It may be that in editing it was sacrificed to the Elohist passages which, in view of the subject, could hardly have said anything other than what the Yahwist did. In the Elohist the well known key word goes: "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50:20, RSV; compare 45:3-13). Whether this reference to "many people" includes Egypt must remain uncertain in the case of the Elohist; see 46:3. But the Yahwist would certainly have meant it to include them; see 47:13-26.

We have quite a significant thumbprint in the scene with Potiphar. This officer of Pharaoh places Joseph over his entire house. Then 39:5 says, "From the time that Potiphar made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he had, in house and field." The whole scene reads like a rough draft

of the coming activity of Grand Vizier Joseph and his salutary effect upon all Egypt; see Genesis 41:49, 57. The wisdom given to the Patriarch of Israel is here the means by which blessing is transmitted —the effect is the preservation of life. Perhaps in the political wisdom of Joseph the Yahwist wishes to hold a mirror before even the "wise" Solomon and his advisors. Even distant empires, therefore, are not to be excluded when all the families of the earth shall find blessing in Israel.

Under this theme the Yahwist also places the famous exodus tradition which, in place of its old connection with the conquest theme, receives an entirely new purpose[53]. Probably because of his primary concern, he has seized upon and shaped mainly the plague narratives. At its climax, in a scene that has no equal in the Elohist or Priestly books, he dramatizes the message in a beautiful and illuminating exchange.

In Exodus 10:28-29 all the negotiations of Pharaoh with Moses are conclusively broken off: "Take heed to yourself; never see my face again; for in the day you see my face you shall die" (RSV). And Moses' reply is as stern: "I will not see your face again." Thus, with artistic mastery, the completely unexpected is prepared for in that final scene, beginning at Exodus 12:29, on which everything now depends. During the night of the slaying of the firstborn, Pharaoh himself, despite all that has previously occurred, calls Moses again. And in the nocturnal audience he says, entirely on his own (after Yahweh has afflicted Egypt with the curse because of the despised sons of Joseph), "Rise up, go forth from among my people . . . and go, serve Yahweh as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and"—the emphatic conclusion of Pharaoh—"effect the blessing for me, also!" (vss. 31-32)

Here the password has been used that can unlock all the previous passages. One might even place above them the words "Whoever despises you, him will I curse." Even here this statement has no independent significance but must go beyond, to the point where the one brought under the curse turns to find blessing in Israel. Here the manner of transmitting the blessing is Israel's worship. The earlier scenes have prepared this meaning. Again and again after a plague Pharaoh implores the Israelites, "Entreat Yahweh, that he

may remove from me . . ." (Ex. 8:8; compare 8:25; 9:28). And in 10:17: "Now, therefore, forgive my sin, I pray you, only this once, and entreat Yahweh your God only to remove this death from me." The manner of conveying the blessing is thus similar to Genesis 18—intercession and forgiveness! The effect of the blessing is to be the removal of the curse of judgment. And because Egypt was both a world power and Israel's overlord, the Yahwist's narrative becomes particularly pointed for his contemporaries: in spite of all the suffering received at her hands, Israel is appointed to bring even Egypt under the blessing. It is no wonder that this facet of his kerygma was thought about again in succeeding centuries, when Israel once again saw herself subjugated by world powers[54].

3. As thorough as the Yahwist has been in dealing with the patriarchal and exodus themes, he is positively stingy when it comes to the sojourn in Sinai[55]. But how could it be otherwise in light of his kerygma? The peoples of the world, whom he dealt with in the primal history, who made the patriarchal theme so fruitful, and who figured so boldly in the Joseph and exodus stories—all these peoples have no place whatever in the Sinai tradition. Naturally, he cannot just omit the story, since it had earlier coalesced with the rest of the themes[56]. He does not wish to eliminate it either, because Israel can only be a blessing as indeed Yahweh's people. The Covenant at Sinai appoints Israel as a whole to the Abrahamic blessing. (Genesis 26:28 f. has shown us that the blessing sometimes comes in the form of a covenant.) Accordingly, by a covenant, Yahweh validates for the whole of Israel everything that was valid to the Patriarchs. Beyond that, the Sinai story can provide the Yahwist with nothing fertile. In Exodus 34:12*a* and 15*a* the Yahwist's words on covenant-making are secondarily expanded: "Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither you go." (RSV) These are statements in the Deuteronomist's style[57]. The Yahwist could not easily take up anything comparable, and he did not.

The situation is different with the conquest tradition. That the Yahwist does not strongly accentuate it we have already seen and understood[58]. But it was not as resolutely retrograde to him as the Sinai story; for in it, Israel encountered the nations. For that very

reason the Balaam narrative, in which the Moabites appear again, comes at the end. Already, as the story passed on to him, the narrative had to do with blessing and curse, and chiefly with curse, which the Moabite king, Balak, demanded of the seer, Balaam, against Israel (Num. 22:6). The tradition is dimly visible in the word for cursing (*qbb*) in 22:11, 17; 24:10(J); 23:8, 11, 13, 25, 27(E)—a word not common in the Yahwist. Balaam cannot accept the demand; he must bless Israel, who is blessed. Israel's blessing is unpreventable. Thus Balak may come to know that in this troublesome Israel the blessing itself camps in his midst:

> ". . . how fair are your tents, O Jacob,
> your encampments, O Israel!
> Like valleys that stretch afar,
> like gardens beside a river,
> . . . and his seed shall be in many waters,
> his king shall be higher than Agag,
> and his kingdom shall be exalted.
> . . . Those who bless you are blessed,
> those who curse you are cursed."
> [Num. 24:5-9]

It is an open question whether Moab receives the blessing. The second saying does speak of smashing Moab's forehead (24:17). This corresponds to the plague narratives and to the distress of the opening of David's reign. The Yahwist is cautious in his treatment of the tradition. At the conclusion of the narrative (Num. 24:25) Balaam returns to his home, and "Balak also went his way." Moab's blessing has not yet come.

This corresponds to the first interpretive passage of the patriarchal history, where, in spite of Abraham's intercession, Sodom is destroyed, and to the exodus narrative, where Pharoah and the Egyptians are drowned in the sea. In Numbers 25:1-5 the Yahwist links to the Balaam narrative the report of Israel's apostasy to Baal Peor, god of the Moabites[59]. Consequently, not only did Moab lose its share in the blessing of Israel, but Israel herself, in her apostasy from Yahweh, missed the purpose which was shown her in the promise to Abraham. This concluding passage has a warning function similar to that of Genesis 12:10 ff., which follows upon 12:3.

These texts indicate to us that the Yahwist does not yet wish

to write the history of the fulfillment of the promise. He has written the story of the curse upon man in a quite comprehensive fashion. At this point all the families of the earth are actually present. But that they find blessing in Israel is something the Yahwist must still put before Israel as a kerygma. To be sure, fulfillment flares up here and there: in Isaac's covenant with the Philistine king, Abimelech; in Jacob's blessed service to the Aramean, Laban; in Joseph's works among the Egyptians. Even the Yahwist preaches to a situation "between promise and fulfillment."[60] The fullness—"all the families of the earth will gain blessing in Israel"—is for now present only in the promise, and it is placed before Israel as a task, with numerous examples to earnest that it works.

It must have been cutting to the hubris[61] of those who lived ostentatiously in Solomon's days to learn that they had not obtained Yahweh's blessing, and would not obtain it until through them all nations had found blessing—deliverance to a free, productive life. Thus, for the sake of this high purpose, the Yahwist wrenches the blasé back to Yahweh's beginnings, reinterpreting the traditions for his own time with compelling power[62].

IV

Gerhard von Rad has spoken recently about the "ceaseless actualization of redemptive history [*geschichtliche Heilsfakten*]" which makes each generation view itself as "setting out anew toward a fulfillment."[63] This can be easily pointed out in the proclamation of the Yahwist. As we have seen, the Yahwist has summoned the patriarchal tradition into his own age in a surprising new form. And his message—that it is Yahweh's purpose to bless all the nations of the earth in Israel—itself produced echoes and interpretations in the following centuries.

Perhaps in the peculiar wording of Psalm 47, the Yahweh-king hymn, we hear an echo of the Yahwist:

> Yahweh is king over the nations;
> Yahweh sits on his holy throne.
> The princes of the people are gathered
> as *the people of the God of Abraham.*
> For the shields of the earth belong to Yahweh;
> he is highly exalted! [Emphasis added]

If Psalm 47 calls all the nations around the throne of God the "*people* of the God of Abraham,"[64] then Genesis 12:3*b* has apparently worked its way into the Jerusalem cult tradition. Here the Jerusalem cult poetry subsumes the message of the Yahwist under the figure of Yahweh's kingship. That figure of speech implies that Yahweh alone, as king of the nations, can fulfill his promise to them—but he will do it through Israel.

In a much more pointed manner, the Yahwistic theme is taken up by two eschatological, prophetic statements found in Isaiah 19: 23-25: "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship [Yahweh] with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, since Yahweh of hosts blesses her, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage.' " In this reinterpretation the brutal empire, Assyria, and the old oppressor, Egypt, are drawn into a triple alliance for the first time, with the people of blessing, Israel, in the middle. The boldness with which honorifics belonging to Israel are attributed to Egypt and Assyria is without parallel in the Old Testament: "my people," "work of my hands." Thus, going beyond Genesis 12:3*b*, this passage declares that even the most obstinate world powers are included, and that "blessing for the nations" implies equal billing with Israel.

The interpretation of the Yahwist's message moves in a different direction in Jeremiah 4:1-2: "If you return, O Israel, says Yahweh, I will receive you. If you remove your abominations . . . and if you swear, 'As Yahweh lives,' in justice and in uprightness, then nations shall gain blessing in her, and in her shall they glory." The change from direct address to the third person in verse 2*b* makes it probable that we find here a secondary interpretation. True to form, Jeremiah says here that Israel can fulfill her redemptive assignment (*Heilsauftrag*) in the world—her task ever since Genesis 12:3*b*—only when she herself confesses God with undivided loyalty and uprightness of life.

Postexilic prophecy works from the opposite end of the promise—that Israel can become a curse, and in fact has been.

Zechariah 8:13 says, "And as you have been a byword of cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you and you shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong." (RSV) Accordingly, Israel requires an entirely new saving action by Yahweh, so that she may attain to her destiny among the nations of the world.

Through complete historical ruptures and total discontinuities the word of promise is continually placed before Israel, yet in such a way that new acts of Yahweh are proclaimed which match Israel's failure. The promise encourages Israel to live anew in face of the future which is announced.

Zechariah 8:23 leads a step further by offering a concrete example for the eschatological fulfillment of the old message: "Thus says Yahweh of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, 'Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' " The mission to humanity is illustrated in a single scene: one Israelite will draw ten foreigners. In this the universal extent is not abandoned but, rather, clarified in a new way. The ten foreigners "come from the nations of every tongue," as if the confusion of tongues at the end of the Tower of Babel narrative were standing in the background (as in Genesis 12:3). In a similar way, the foreigners' motive for coming—"we have heard that God is with you"—is reminiscent of Abimelech's reason for coming to Isaac, in Genesis 26:28(J)[65].

Thus in completely new situations the old word is presented to Israel in ever new forms. Transcending historical revolutions, the word of promise is revealed as a continuum, in which Yahweh's saving will in Israel remains true to itself for all the nations of the earth. This invariability is the ultimate reason why seemingly diverse kerygmatic constructions later on became "Scripture."

I will close with two questions:

A. Must not something corresponding to this be said when Paul, in Galatians 3:8, takes up the kerygma of the Yahwist and, in so doing, takes up a basic kerygmatic motif of the Old Testament? Certainly the manner of transmitting the blessing and its effect are now seen in a new light, when Paul understands the word of promise of Genesis 12:3*b* from the standpoint of Jesus and when he bears

witness to Jesus from this word. But does something occur here which is basically different from what happens when the Yahwist and his successors (Zech. 8:13) find the received word interpreted by the new acts of Yahweh? Is it not necessary, in terms of the history of tradition, to speak of a certain continuity with, or even assimilation of, the Old Testament's history of proclamation? Does not the foregoing history of proclamation acquire an orienting and legitimizing significance for Paul[66]?

B. Beyond this, I am asking whether we, today, can fully understand Jesus theologically and preach when we do not, among other things, make use of the kerygma of the Yahwist and its rich development as an aid in understanding and proclamation. This means not only in its presentation of human history but, above all, in the patriarchal and exodus stories. The eschatological events of the New Testament should as surely guide us to a critical examination of the Old as the deeds of Yahweh in David's time guided the Yahwist to look critically at the patriarchal tradition. Does not the Yahwist, therefore, with his narrative interpretations strongly advance our insight into why, how, and for what purpose the blessing of the God of Israel comes in Abraham's son, Jesus, as *the* blessing for life for all the families of the earth, and will he not show us how the church as the New Israel can serve him in the history of the present day? And can we discern the path for the church in the world today and tomorrow if we do not open our minds to the way this word has acted towards us in history and if we do not carefully consider the preparation of the Way and its end in the kerygma of the Yahwist—which has become really effectual with Jesus of Nazareth?

4

THE ELOHISTIC FRAGMENTS IN THE PENTATEUCH[1]

by Hans Walter Wolff

Translated by Keith R. Crim

The most prominent theme of the Elohist is the Fear of God.

There are still among us those who sit at their desks and murder the Elohist with their pens. I am thinking not only of that Scandinavian school which thinks there was a long oral tradition of the Pentateuch materials and holds that the final editing of these materials was the first and last literary editing. I have in mind more particularly those scholars who regard the so-called Elohistic passages as mere reinterpretations of the work of the Yahwist.

Many questions in Pentateuch research are highly disputed, but several main conclusions are in general accepted as certain. Among them is the view that the final editors used the Priestly document as the basis of their work and as the framework for the whole[2]. In addition, there is general agreement that older literary formulations were fitted into the later framework. In this connection the Yahwist enjoys special recognition for his dominant and final role in determining the outline of the present Pentateuch[3]. On the other hand, difficulties continue to be raised by the question of whether we are to regard the portion of the Pentateuch which antedates the Priestly document as the comprehensive work of a single school in the time of the early monarchy[4], or whether it can be analyzed into several literary strands[5]. An issue that comes up again and again is whether, in at least some of the Pentateuch narratives, the Elohist is to be credited with an original formulation, independent of the

Yahwist[6]. In the materials that are older than P, several themes occur in doublets, and these not only treat the same materials, but also show distinctive features of language, narrative style, and theological modes of thought. Unmistakable doublets are found as early as the patriarchal narratives that portray Abraham and Sarah among foreigners (Gen. 12:20), later in the Sinai materials in the Book of Exodus, and then in the Balaam stories (Num. 22–24). The differences in language and in concepts have often been investigated, but much less attention has been directed to the characteristic, dominating role which the speeches play in the Elohist narratives, in contrast to the Yahwist document.

The real point of dispute is how these doublets are to be explained. Are they isolated variants of the J material that were added in each case by an editor? Do they go back to a collection of separate stories that had circulated independent of each other? Or do they have their origin in a totally independent conception of the main themes in the Pentateuch? On the basis of my research, I am inclined to answer the last question in the affirmative. I must immediately qualify this with the observation that only fragments of the total work can be shown to have been added to J[7]. Above all, the editors probably omitted those doublets which did not add anything of significance. Therefore we speak of "Elohistic fragments."[8]

The assumption that there was an independent work, with a totally distinctive interpretation of the old Israelite traditions, cannot be subtantiated merely by observed differences in vocabulary and outlook. It has been repeatedly pointed out that the Elohist called God "Elohim," the original inhabitants of the land "Amorites," and maidens "*'āmāh,*" while the Yahwist said "Yahweh," "Canaanites," and "*shifhāh.*" In E, on account of Sarah, God deals with the foreign king in a dream containing long speeches and the king's replies (Gen. 20:3-7), while in J, in the same situation, God abruptly sends severe plagues and says nothing at all (Gen. 12:17). In E the angel of God calls to Hagar from heaven (Gen. 21:17), while in J she encounters the angel of Yahweh at a spring on her way through the desert (Gen. 16:7). In J Yahweh tells the Israelites in Egypt, "I will bring you up out of oppression in Egypt,"

(Ex. 3:17) and in E Moses receives the command, "Lead my people out of Egypt" (Ex 3:10; cf. 12). In E during the passage through the Red Sea the angel of God protects the Israelite camp, while according to J. Yahweh himself looks down and fights for Israel (Ex. 14:24-25). These and similar observations have been tabulated[9], but they can all be explained as verbal and conceptual variants due to a reinterpretation[10]. There are, however, in addition to the doublets many and various connected accounts which belong to the distinctive material of E. They are found from the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 down to the war against Sihon in Numbers 21, and so the Elohist has come to be regarded as at least a special collector of stories.

Are we justified, however, in holding that behind these surviving fragments we can discern a work that was composed as an independent unit and that at a specific period of time brought the traditional materials together under its own theme? The mere domonstration of doublets, showing linguistic differences and divergent patterns of theological thought is not enough to convince us of this. Before it is possible to regard the Elohist as a new and distinctive witness to the ancient traditions of Israel, it is necessary to demonstrate that there is an inner bond uniting the stories and to show, at least provisionally, that there was originally the intention of presenting a definite point of view. Various observations have led me to attempt such a demonstration. It is my intention to defend here the following basic thesis:

> The Elohistic fragments in the Pentateuch point toward an originally independent documentary source, with its own technique of composition and an independent message.

I will begin by seeking to establish *the* distinctive theme of the message. Then I will deal with several significant links that bind the stories together. Finally, I will consider toward what situation in Israel this new version of the canonical tradition might have been directed. In this study I will confine myself to texts that present-day research generally accepts as Elohistic and specifically to the larger cycles of stories within the Pentateuch.

I

The first fully developed Elohistic narrative in Genesis deals with Sarah's entry into the harem of King Abimelech, of Gerar (Gen. 20:1-18). Abraham had falsely presented her as his sister. Since the Yahwist has preserved the same material in two accounts with different participants (Gen. 12:10-20; 26:7-11), the specific emphases of the Elohist can be clearly seen. In both of the Yahwist versions there is dialogue only at the beginning and the end. At the beginning the patriarch says that his wife is his sister, and at the end he is reprimanded by the foreign king and sent away. The patriarch's guilt is beyond dispute. He had been called to bless foreigners (Gen. 12:3*b*), but instead he has placed them in extreme danger. The Elohistic account, on the other hand, consists almost exclusively of dialogue. An entirely new element is that God speaks to a foreign king in a dream, and even exchanges words with him twice. The only point at issue is the very involved question of guilt. Objectively, Abimelech is guilty because he took Sarah as his wife. Subjectively, he is innocent. Not only had he been deceived but he had not even touched Sarah. God had prevented him from sinning, and as a prophet Abraham was to intercede for him so that the threat of death would be removed. We sense the serious theological manner in which the question of guilt is confronted. In the early morning Abimelech told his servants what had happened and so drew them into the discussion. "The men were very much afraid." (Gen. 20:8*b*) Then Abimelech confronted Abraham with a twofold question that expressed his torment. Even now the point at issue was only the complicated question of guilt. "How have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin?" "What were you thinking of that you did this thing?" Abraham has to answer. Now his guilt is the focus of attention. He is subjectively guilty because he led Abimelech into the danger of committing a sin punishable by death. And yet he can justify what he has done by pointing out that Sarah actually is his half-sister. Moreover he possesses the prophetic power of intercession that can remove the curse from Abimelech's house. Thus we see that the Elohist has made a very involved theological problem of guilt out of

the unambiguous failing of the patriarch. In the midst of it all, however, a single sentence sheds light on everything. It is the first part of Abraham's answer to Abimelech, "I did it because I thought, There is no fear of God at all in this place." (vs. 11)

The narrative has prepared us for this statement by the remark following Abimelech's report to his servants, "and the men were very much afraid." Doesn't the statement about the fear of God really explain everything? In Gerar nothing would have happened to Sarah if it had been known that she was Abraham's wife. Here God's commands are honored. The dream dialogue between God and Abimelech has demonstrated this anew. Abraham is acquitted but at the same time condemned because he did not take into account the fear of God in that place. We may ask, Is not this the key to what is new here? Something that was completely unknown to the other versions of the same materials. Does not this key show that the story is now thought of as a twofold temptation? Who was really tempted more severely, Abraham or Abimelech? The point was to test the fear of God in both parties to the action. Fear of God is understood here as respect for the freedom and responsibility of the outsider. Wherever God is feared, that is, wherever men are obedient to God's protective will, we can expect to find respect for the rights of outsiders.

The next, highly artistic narrative of the Elohist, the account of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22, is his best-known story and shows in a remarkable manner traces of the steps in its transmission[11]. In this development the important layer of material is that in which everything is focused on saving the son. The way is prepared for it during the long journey to the place of sacrifice, during which the father and son hold a lonely, frightened conversation; and Abraham says, "God will provide himself [*'elōhîm yireh*] the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." (22:8, RSV). The climax is reached when Abraham sees the ram caught in the thicket (vs. 13). The rescue is permanently commemorated by the name given to the site, "The Lord will provide [*Yahweh yireh*]." (vs. 14) The use of the term "Yahweh" shows that the Elohist lets the tradition find expression here. But at the same time he gives the account a new emphasis and hears a new message in it. At the very first he

expressed the theme of the account: "God tested Abraham." (vs. 1, RSV)

The demand that Abraham offer his only son the beloved Isaac takes the old material of the rescue of the son and reworks it into the temptation of Abraham. The main concern now is to depict, succinctly and excitingly, step by step the path of obedience, from the early departure after Abraham hears the command, along the long road, to the point where the knife is pulled. The Elohist expresses the decisive word by a skillful play[12] on the key phrase of the old tradition, *'elôhîm yireh* (vs. 8, cf. vs. 14), when at the most tense moment the angel tells Abraham to stop, and explains, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God [*yerē' 'elōhîm*]." (vs. 12, RSV) Here the theme *'elōhîm yireh* is transformed into *yerē' 'elōhîm,* and the Elohist has returned to the theme of the fear of God, already announced in chapter 20, the theme which gave the old story its contemporary relevance. Here he defines "fear of God" as obedience which does not hold back even what is most precious, when God demands it, and commits to God even that future which he himself has promised. Here the old account demonstrates how such strict obedience is answered: God will provide. This assurance gives enough strength for carrying out even the bitterest sacrifice.

Genesis 22 thus confirms our assumption that the Elohist was especially concerned to teach the true fear of God. I will not attempt to show that other individual passages record further tests of obedience, even though it would not be hard to do so. Instead, I shall confine myself to the question of whether the fear of God theme is important for the Elohist elsewhere.

Anyone who reads the Elohistic Joseph narratives cannot think it is accidental that in the surviving fragments Joseph himself appears as one who fears God. The author places the key word in Joseph's mouth in a passage that is almost incidental to the story. In the account of the brothers' first trip to Egypt, Joseph devises a test. Instead of the word *nissāh,* which the Elohist used of God's testing Abraham in 22:1, here the niph'al of *bāḥan* is repeatedly used (42:15 f.) to describe the way Joseph treats his brothers. They are to be tested to see whether or not they are spies, whether they

are still ruled by their old animosity, or whether they can be reformed[13]. They are to bring their youngest brother. Until then, all are to be kept as hostages except for one who is to take the message home (42:16). Finally only Simeon is held hostage (vs. 24). Joseph tells them, "Do this [i.e., submit yourselves to this test] and you will live, for I fear God." (*'ᵃnî yārē' ethhā'ᵉlohîm,* 42:18, RSV) In this context, the fact that a man fears God is a guarantee that his word is reliable. It is surprising that the key word is found only here, but who knows what was lost to us through the editorial process! Joseph's obedience is tested and proved time and again. I will cite only his well-known final words to his anxious brothers, who fear he will punish them after Jacob's death. He tells them: "Fear not, for do I hold the office of God?" (50:19) For him the fact that God meant for good the evil which the brothers had done was decisive. Here the theme of Joseph's fear of God reaches its climax. God brings salvation even out of the most serious human transgressions; anyone, therefore, who reflects that God is able to make even inhumanity serve his purpose can certainly trust him—even guilt-ridden brothers. We are still on the trail of the key word!

It appears again at the beginning of the Book of Exodus in the watershed transition from the history of the Patriarchs to that of the nation. We find it in a passage which attracts little attention, but which is both remarkable and significant: the account of the disobedience of the Hebrew midwives. This belongs clearly to the Elohistic material (Ex. 1:15-21). The Yahwist hereby notes the facts succinctly: "But the more they [Israel] were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad." (1:12, RSV) "Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ᶜEvery son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.' " (1:22, RSV) The Elohist, however, develops the question in extensive contacts between the "king of Egypt"[14] and the Hebrew midwives, whose names are explicitly mentioned—Shiphrah and Puah (vs. 15). The midwives are to observe the sex of each newborn child and let only girls live. Then it says, "But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them." (vs. 17*a*, RSV) The king called them to account for letting the males live, and the midwives got out of it by

explaining how quickly and without assistance the Hebrew women bore their children. The account concludes with the words, "So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and grew very strong." (vs. 20 RSV) The final statement repeats what is clearly the decisive motif, "and because the midwives feared God he gave them families." (vs. 21, RSV) This repeated emphasis on the fear of God at this decisive point in the formation of the people of Israel in Egypt cannot be considered accidental, especially when the earlier Elohistic passages are kept in mind. Fear of God stood guard over the cradle of the people of Israel. But here "fear of God" means disobedience to the commands of the king of Egypt. Also, it is women whose actions are decisive for the formation of God's people. Obedience to God leads to disobedience to the will of political oppressors who decree death where God desires life.

This being so, we are not surprised when we read at the very beginning of the Elohistic fragment of the call of Moses, "And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God." (Ex. 3:6*b*, RSV) The Yahwist has nothing comparable to this.

In the major Elohistic account in Exodus 18 it is evident how decisive the Elohist felt it was for all leaders in Israel to fear God. Jethro sees that his son-in-law is overburdened and advises him to decrease his load of responsibility for judging cases. In order to accomplish this, Moses should choose capable men, men of whom it is said that they fear God (*yirê 'elōhîm*) (Ex. 18:21). Fear of God is their distinctive characteristic. What follows shows that here "fear of God" means being reliable and rejecting dishonest gain.

Can we still say it is accidental that the Elohist so often takes fear of God as the decisive theme of his stories? We must remember how few of them are preserved in their entirety and note that despite the fragmentary nature of the transmitted material almost all the great men are explicitly said to fear God: Abraham, Joseph, the midwives at the birth of the nation, Moses and his judges. As no writer of Pentateuchal material before him or after him, the Elohist obviously is stressing to the Israel of his own day the importance of the fear of God.

I hope that the Elohist's Sinai narrative will remove the last doubt, because here at last all Israel is confronted with the funda-

mental will of God. How does the Elohist present this? In Exodus 19 we have only a few Elohist additions to the Yahwist text; they speak primarily of the blasts of the trumpet that grew louder and louder and made all the people on the mountain of theophany tremble (vss. 16, 19). Then after the insertion of the Decalogue there comes in 20:18*b*-21 an unmistakable Elohistic unit[15]. According to the original text of 18*b*[16] the people stood at a distance, trembling with fear. They asked Moses to relay God's words to them so that they could hear them. If God spoke to them directly, they would die (vs. 19). Then Moses speaks the decisive word, "Do not fear: for God has come to prove [*nassôth*] you, and that the fear of him [*yirāthô*] may do its work on you[17], that you may not sin." (vs. 20) Whereupon Moses strides off alone into the darkness of God's presence. The address to Israel brings out most succinctly what in the opinion of the Elohist the Israel of his day needed to hear. When God began to speak to Israel his will was the same as it was when he declared it to Abraham and as it had been in the other narratives: God tests his people through hard trials (*nissāh* in Gen. 22:1 as here in Ex. 20:20). God's normative word from Mount Sinai to all Israel is directed toward the same goal that he had set for the Patriarchs: fear of God, which produced obedience through trust in God's promise (Gen. 22) and which obediently accepts God's assurances and which prefers to disobey human commands rather than fail to follow God's word (*hata'*) (Ex. 1:15-21)[18]. In the question of obedience and disobedience we cannot fail to see that the overriding concern of the Elohist's proclamation is to make clear the significance of the fear of God. Our first thesis then is the following:

> The most prominent theme of the Elohist is the fear of God. By means of the traditional materials from salvation history the Elohist wanted to lead the Israel of his day through the events in which they were tempted and bring them to new obedience and to new disobedience.

Naturally he also recounted much other material simply out of respect for what had been handed down from the past.

II

The inner consistency of the Elohistic document is seen not only in the emphasis on a common theme throughout a series of narratives. This document also differs from the Yahwist and priestly documents in the way it ties the separate narratives and blocks of traditional material together. The Yahwist strung his materials together rather loosely and used a few insertions (such as Gen. 6:5-8 and 12:1-3) and repeated certain key words to give the document a kerygmatic character[19]. The Elohist proceeded more deliberately and within the separate accounts themselves expressed connections to earlier or later narratives. This is also done, as in the Yahwist document, in the purely external form of a connected itinerary. The Elohist, for example, has Abraham return to his starting point in Beersheba (Gen. 21:33) after the test of his obedience in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:19).

More typical of the Elohist is what he does in the story of the threat to the ancestral mother. When Abraham is excusing himself to Abimelech he says, "When God caused me to wander from my father's house, I said to her [Sarah], ' . . . at every place to which we come, say of me, He is my brother'." (Gen. 20:13, RSV) The Yahwist does not have anything comparable in either 12:10 ff. or 26:7 ff. The Elohist connects this passage with the story of Abraham's departure from his homeland, of which only fragments are preserved in Genesis 15:1-5, such as, perhaps, the statement in verse 2 "for I continue childless." [20]

Numerous other links to earlier accounts are thematically much more interesting. The Elohist followed the stylistic device of inserting them in the speeches which he constructed in his characteristic manner. First there is the story of Jacob's leaving the service of Laban. This is not merely flight, as it is in J (Gen. 31:20-22), but it is in response to a specific command from God. "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go forth from this land, and return to the land of your birth." (31:13, RSV) The term "pillar," the act of anointing, and the vow are exact reminders of the Elohistic strand in the account of the dream at Bethel (Gen. 28:18-20). This continuity reminds Jacob

of his vow, thus reintroducing the Elohist's prime theme—obedience.

In the Joseph story there is a veritable network of such connections. Reminiscences and anticipations reveal here the combination of three or four temptation accounts which are of specific significance for the Elohist materials. We may begin with Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker in prison. At the conclusion he tells the butler, "But remember me, when it is well with you, and do me the kindness, I pray you, to make mention of me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews." (Gen. 40:14-15*a*, RSV) The reference to Joseph's abduction by Midianite traders (Gen. 37: 28*a*) is not especially germane to the plot at this point, and is typical of the Elohist's cross-referencing. Even more significant is the reference to the future, which is fulfilled in 41:9-13. There the chief butler tells, again in dialogue, that now after two years Pharaoh's dreams (41:1 ff.) have reminded him of his faults (*hatā'a*). The butler then recounts the story of his dream while he was a prisoner and how it was interpreted and mentions the young Hebrew, "a servant of the captain of the guard." (37:36; 40:3) So now Joseph is recommended to Pharaoh as a proven interpreter of dreams. The links show how near Joseph came to missing a test of his faithfulness.

It is well known how the story of Joseph's brothers is pursued over a long time span. Once again in dialogue it is shown that this is a story of trials that were not successfully met. After Joseph tests their reliability with temporary arrest and the demand that Benjamin be brought to him, they say to each other, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us and we would not listen; therefore is this distress come upon us." (42:21, RSV) This refers to a scene—between 37:24 (Joseph thrown into the cistern) and 37:28-29 (Joseph taken out of the cistern by the Midianites)—which was omitted in the editorial process of uniting the Elohist and the Yahwist documents. In that scene the mercy of the brothers was apparently put to the test when Joseph pled with them (*behithḥannô*) (Gen. 42:21). Their failure in the hour of testing is a double burden because Reuben had warned them. We are reminded of this in the sequel in 42:22, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the lad? But you would

not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." (RSV). This also looks back to the account in 37:22 (cf. vs. 29) and formulates the belief that failure when one's obedience is tested is the result of not listening to a warning or to a plea.

The failure of Joseph's brothers stands in contrast to his own faithfulness. This likewise is dramatized by links to earlier scenes. After Jacob's death Joseph's brothers remind him, "Your father gave this command before he died, 'Say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, ...' " (50: 16-17, RSV) This refers to a scene that apparently was sacrificed in the editorial process of combining E with J. (The omission of the scenes of Joseph's pleading, 42:21, and of Jacob's request, 50:16-17, testifies quite clearly that the work of the Elohist is a major literary composition whose fragmentary state at present is due to a process of literary editing.) Joseph, then, is seen as tempted to take revenge on his brothers. But he sums up the whole story of his relation to them in the words, "Fear not, for do I hold the office of God? As for you, you meant evil against me; but God directed it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." (50:19-20) Joseph passes the test because he recognizes the goal of the tests sent by God—God who is able to turn even tests that are failed to his own purpose.

The distinctive nature of this use of themes to forge links between incidents cannot be explained merely as a feature of the Joseph narratives. In the first place, it cannot be found in the Yahwist parts of the narrative; and in the second place, this way of looking back and looking forward extends far beyond the Joseph narrative. This is demonstrated not only by our previous observations concerning the Abraham narrative (Gen. 20:13) and the Jacob-Laban stories (Gen. 31:13) but also by the conclusion of the Jacob narrative in E. It begins in 46:3 ff. with a reminder of the ancient scene at Beersheba. In a night vision Jacob is addressed just as Abraham had been in Genesis 22. God calls, "Jacob, Jacob." And he answers, "Here am I." Then comes the assurance: "do not be afraid to go down to Egypt; for I will there make of you a great nation. . . . I will also bring you up again; and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." The final clause refers to a scene that has not been

preserved[21], but which probably stood before the Elohist passage in Genesis 50:10*b*-11. The promise of a great nation points beyond the limits of the Joseph story to that scene in which the midwives succeed in disobeying Pharaoh, where the concluding words are, "and the people multiplied and grew very strong." (Ex. 1:20*b*, RSV)

The links extend beyond the exodus traditions into the stories that tell of the conquest of the Promsed Land. Here too the Elohist makes them a part of dialogue. In the account of Moses' meeting with his Midianite father-in-law Jethro, we read in Exodus 18:8 (RSV) "Then Moses told his father-in-law . . . all the hardship that had come upon them in the way" (*kel hatt^{e}lā'ah asher m^{e}sa'atham*). As verse 9 shows, this refers to their troubles in Egypt. Later at the beginning of the conquest the same words are used in the request for permission to pass through the land of Edom. From Kadesh, Moses sent messengers to the King of Edom to say, "Thus says your brother Israel: You know all the adversity that has befallen us." (Num. 20:14, RSV) Here also in what follows reference is made to the troubles they had in Egypt (vs. 15) and then to their exodus, led by an angel (cf. Num. 20:16 with Ex. 14:19).

According to the Elohist, Edom refused permission (Num. 20:18-21) and so did King Sihon of the Amorites (Num. 21:23). But Israel drives the Amorites out (Num. 21:32). In the fragments that have been preserved there is no specific reminder here of earlier accounts. We are, however, reminded of the passage in Genesis 15 which is to be credited to the Elohist. It contains in verses 13 and 16 God's word to Abraham which predicts oppression in a foreign land and which also promises a return to the Promised Land in the fourth generation after Abraham, when the iniquity of the Amorites is complete (vs. 16)[22]. Here the problem of guilt is raised, a problem which concerns the Elohist in obvious ways as he traces the paths on which God led his people, from Genesis 20 to Genesis 50:20.

But above all, stress is placed on God's word, which encompasses all events and which is adequate for all challenges. The last major account in the Pentateuch which can with certainty be assigned to the Elohist in the Balaam cycle, Numbers 23, glorifies this trust-

worthy word. This account is typical of the attitude expressed toward the occupation of the land. The Moabites want to destroy Israel, but their will cannot compete with the word that God places in Balaam's mouth (Num. 23:11 f., 19-20):

> God is not man that he should lie,
> or a son of man, that he should repent.
> Has he said, and will he not do it?
> Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? [RSV]

Thus the line has been traced from Genesis 15 to Numbers 23. The whole span of salvation history brings home to the Israel of the Elohist's day the point that is made specific in the Joseph stories and in the various accounts of the testing of Abraham's obedience: In all Israel's trials the people must let themselves be led by their trust in the word of their God and be obedient to him alone. As a second thesis we can state:

> The Elohist linked the separate traditional accounts together by dialogues which reveal a highly developed skill in composition. References to scenes that were not preserved imply later editing by someone else. The links show that over a long period of time God led his people through a series of tests of their obedience.

III

The special themes and the distinctive way in which the narratives are linked compel us to regard the Elohist portions of the Pentateuch as not merely variants that comment on the Yahwist material or as only a loose collection of parallel stories and original contributions, but rather as fragments of an originally independent work that displays a high degree of theological reflection and narrative skill. In what age then would this distinctive message best fit? Many have noted that there are numerous indications that the material originated in the Northern Kingdom[23]. It can be shown that the author was familiar with specific local traditions from the north. In addition, prophecy is such a significant phenomenon for him that Abraham appears as the recipient of God's promise (Gen. 15) and as a prophetic intercessor (Gen. 20:7); Joseph as one qualified to interpret dreams and thus receive messages that reveal God's will

(Gen. 40:8 ff.; 41:16); and above all, Moses as mediator of God's will (Ex. 20:19); and last, Balaam as a messenger of God's word who cannot reject his commission and in whose oracles—in contrast to the Yahwist account (Num. 24)—God's word in its power to direct history becomes the theme itself (Num. 23:19).

In that light, we might think of the century between Elijah and Hosea. That was the dangerous time when Israel was tempted to disobey the God of Israel and obey foreign lords. Canaanite religion, with its fertility cult, put Israel's faith to the test. Stories such as those of child sacrifice (cf. Hos. 13:2) and of foreign women became quite relevant for Israel[24]. At times, obedience to God must result in disobedience to the king. Justice runs the danger of being perverted by corrupt judges (cf. Ex. 18:21 and Amos 5:12).

It is not possible to specify the time any more closely. And the questions of where the Elohist got his key phrase, "fear of God," and what the significance is of its identity with one of the key phrases of the wisdom literature must remain unanswered here[25]. The Elohist addresses Israel as "a people dwelling alone, and not reckoning itself among the nations." (Num. 23:9, RSV) Israel is to understand its own distinctive history as a unique exploration of the fear of God. This is seen in the freedom to obey or to disobey, because Israel respects the rights of the foreigner and is capable of surrendering its own rights supported by its confidence in the God who can use even misfortunes as means to the salvation of his people. As the third thesis we can state:

> The new interpretation which the Elohist gave the traditional materials of Israel can be best explained as an outcry against the syncretism following the time of Elijah. During that period Israel faced some of its greatest cultic, political, and social temptations.

To us today the Elohist's theme also pits challenges: What, today, does the fear of God require? What, today, is obedience or disobedience? Everyone who looks closely at himself sees that his life is an open question. Everyone who looks closely at our age is confronted by hard riddles and temptations. If we listen to what the Elohist is saying we can move beyond superficial answers, avoid

overly hasty reactions, and see ourselves being tested as to whether we really fear God.

May we not be missing the deepest secret of our lives if we fail to meet the challenge of the Elohist?

5

THE KERYGMA OF THE DEUTERONOMIC HISTORICAL WORK[1]

by Hans Walter Wolff

Translated by Frederick C. Prussner

With an unprecedented force, Israel's prophets in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. disclosed the present human reality as simply a part of God's ongoing history. Men such as Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, in their anticipation of new, cataclysmic, divinely initiated happenings, exposed the guilt of their own time and moved it into the clear light of divine actions which had occurred earlier. The result was almost necessarily a quick attention to the ongoing movement of things and to the interconnection of all events, particularly because the prophetic word encompassed the whole of current world history[2].

And, as one of the fruits of prohecy, there came into being in the sixth century B. C. a gigantic historical work, unparalleled in the surrounding world. It stands before us today as the Old Testament books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. It follows the course of approximately seven centuries of Israelite history from the time of Moses to the Babylonian exile. With scrupulous care, it assimilates both literary traditions and facts which were experienced directly, and, in the process, achieves an astonishingly unified design.

After a variety of preliminary inquiries, Martin Noth in 1943, demonstrated this convincingly and in detail with his studies on the history of the traditions used in the work[3]. His results in essence were confirmed by Alfred Jepsen's investigations which—surprisingly enough, because independently—also took the sources of the books of Kings as their starting point[4]. For this reason we can accept

Noth's results in wide measure. In the Deuteronomic historical work (DtrH)[5] traditional materials have been put in systematic order, and then have been highlighted by certain new passages; and these usually come in the form of speeches delivered by the most important historical figures. The work probably originated around 550 in the territory of Judah-Benjamin.

The theological assumptions of the work are set forward in a generally clear and persuasive fashion. History is understood as the accomplishment of the word of God which prophets had proclaimed, and more especially, as the fulfillment of the words of Moses that stand at the beginning of the whole work in Deuteronomy. And always in the foreground looms the question of whether Israel is still the people of God—since having put herself in jeopardy by apostasy.

But what the DtrH intended to proclaim with this kind of format has, in my opinion, not been satisfactorily explained. What sermon, by means of his extensive work, does he want to give to his sixth-century contemporaries? They were, remember, the mere remnants of Israel, without king, without the Jerusalem temple, without sovereignty over their land, therefore without their own state and without organized public worship. It is generally agreed that to find the DtrH's kerygma is important—the work is after all a child of prophecy and it has the usual prohetic urgency to issue a command. But what is that command?

I

Martin Noth holds that "the punishment for disobedience, . . . considered by Deuteronomy as a [mere] possibility [but one] which would lead to the destruction of the nation, had now, for DtrH become an accomplished fact," so that "for him the order of things which Deuteronomy had presupposed had come to its final end," and therefore "the actual purpose of his entire historical presentation" was to show that this final end must "be understood as divine judgment."[6] In this view, of course, there is no room for a hopeful future. Quite the reverse: the judgment is to be "viewed as something definitive and final."[7] This perspective is well sustained by the various speeches and reflections whereby DtrH presents his view of history.

What they say is something like this: "If you transgress the covenant order which Yahweh your God has appointed for you and you go and serve other gods and worship them, then Yahweh's anger will be kindled against you, and you shall be quickly blotted out from the good land which he has given to you."[8]

To begin with, one can only ask why an Israelite of the sixth century B. C. would even reach for his pen if he only wanted to explain the final end of Israel's history as the righteous judgment of God. Gerhard von Rad has answered this question by pointing out that this historical work represents "a great judgment doxology which has been transposed from the cultic to the literary realm," and which confesses before God "in order that thou mightest be justified in thy sentence." (Ps. 51:6; Engl. 51:4)[9]

On the other hand, von Rad views DtrH as really more concerned with the "problem of the operation of Yahweh's word in history." Alongside Deuteronomy's word of malediction and the words of threat by the prophets there stands the other word of the promise of salvation which is contained in the Nathan oracle, but which appears to be as yet unfulfilled. In the mention at the very end (2 Kings 25:27ff.) of Jehoiachin's pardon, DtrH may be said to be pointing "to an opportunity with which Yahweh can start over again."[10] Indeed, von Rad considers "the true thematic content of this work . . . [to be] a messianic one."[11] In this view, DtrH did not at all intend only to teach that the exile was a righteous judgment and fulfillment of the threat which Moses and the prophets had proclaimed. Rather, he wanted his readers to expect that beyond that, sometime, the promise made to David of salvation would also be fulfilled.

The final scene does indeed raise serious questions about Noth's thesis that DtrH presents only the end of Israel's history. One cannot be satisfied with Noth's interpretation that DtrH, "because of his own peculiar conscientiousness and reverence for the actual course of events, . . . simply reported as such this last fact known to him on the subject of the history of the Judean kings."[12] That interpretation simply does not comport with the idea that DtrH—as Noth himself insists—used the greatest of care in selecting and organizing his materials[13].

On the other side, it is even less clear to me why one should recognize in this final passage "the beginning of the hoped for deliverance,"[14] as though, in addition to declaring the righteous judgment of God. DtrH wanted also to stimulate hope in the fulfillment of the Nathan oracle. This is already contradicted by the fact that the information from the year 561 in 2 Kings 25:27-30 contains no reference at all to the Nathan oracle whereas the Jerusalem catastrophe of the year 587 is specifically seen by DtrH in 2 Kings 24:2 as coming "according to the word which Yahweh had spoken by his servants, the prophets." And apart from everything else, the notion of a windfall hope is flatly inconsistent with the Nathan oracle, whose fulfillment, DtrH invariably maintains, is contingent on obedience to the word of Moses in Deuteronomy[15]. Even kings are subject to the covenant word which Moses had proclaimed[16]. By that covenant are measured not only the kings of the Northern Kingdom but in the end even the Davidic rulers[17]. When the covenant word is abandoned, the Nathan oracle, too, is no longer in force. It would therefore be very hard to maintain that DtrH is giving rein to hope based on the Nathan oracle—and doing so by this lone brittle piece about Jehoiachin's elevation.

This note about an actual event is precisely, however, what makes it impossible to hold that DtrH intended nothing more than to point to the Jerusalem catastrophe of 587 as a justified and final divine judgment and, therefore, as the deserved ending of Israel's history.

What then *does* DtrH want to say to his contemporaries?

II

The very size of the work requires us to ask whether DtrH did not have a rather complex intention in mind. Had he wanted to arouse hope by means of the Nathan oracle, he should have selected a much narrower and shorter sector from history. What was the purpose of his detailed treatment of the time of Moses, Joshua, the judges, and Samuel? If, on the other hand, it had been his aim to show that Yahweh had accomplished his ancient threat issued at the making of the covenant with Moses and that the history of Israel had now rightly come to its end, then one must ask, in view

of the sheer volume of his presentation, why it did not terminate at a much earlier point. Why does he keep his readers occupied with the ups and downs of events, concatenated through the centuries?

His treatment of the period of the judges already points out to us an answer. He obviously sets great store in showing that apostasy begins immediately following the time of Joshua. "The people served Yahweh as long as Joshua lived." (Judg. 2:7) But immediately after the occupation of the land apostasy sets in. Therewith he invokes Hosea's view of history. He does not envision just a few instances of disloyalty, but states unabashedly that *all* of Israel "did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh and served the baalim." (2:11)

> They departed from Yahweh, the God of their fathers, who had led them out of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the nations who were rounded about and worshipped them; but Yahweh they offended. . . . [Whereupon] the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel . . . and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about and they were no longer able to withstand their enemies [vss. 12 and 14].

That very cycle, according to the DtrH—the whole nation's apostasy and Yahweh's burning anger—had led to the end of the Northern Kingdom, and in Manasseh's days had sealed the fate of Judah and Jerusalem[18]. Why then did Israel's history not come to its end at that time?

> When they cried to Yahweh [19], then Yahweh raised up judges who delivered them from the hand of those plunderers. . . . For Yahweh was moved to pity by their wailing because of those who afflicted and oppressed them [vss. 16, 18].

To cry to Yahweh—this caused the reversal which followed upon both accomplished apostasy and the burning anger of Yahweh—who had, before, carried out his judgment by handing the people over to their enemies. Upon every deliverance there follows in the time of the judges a new apostasy, generation after generation. Why did Israel's history nonetheless continue? Because Israel implored Yahweh anew and because Yahweh was moved to pity.

This pattern of apostasy and turning to Yahweh, of catastrophes and deliverances, does not, however, remain without consequences for the history of God's people. Yahweh ordains a new twist to history. According to the original promise Israel was to take over the whole land, but now it is said,

> I will not drive out before them any of the peoples which Joshua had left at his death, in order to test Israel by them whether they will walk in the ways of Yahweh [2:21-22].

The symbiosis with Canaan appears to DtrH to be a new enactment by Yahweh in history, coming at the end of a long phase of disobedience (cf. Judg. 3:4). But as an added new enactment there appears also the martial protection which Yahweh provides Israel, in the saviors he raises up.

The period of the judges is thereby clearly set apart from the time of Moses and Joshua. But just as clearly, the time of the kings is later set apart from the period of the judges. The great farewell speech of Samuel in 1 Samuel 12 emphasizes this latter difference forcefully. The judges were deliverers whom Yahweh sent because of Israel's prayers. Their king, however, they have demanded in defiant protest against the will of Yahweh. This desire by the people opposes Yahweh's very sovereignty, which DtrH sees as the copestone of the period of the judges[20]. As a result of this rebellion against Yahweh the old covenantal order of the sacred tribal league breaks and falls apart—with disastrous consequences[21]. Israel was to become a state like all the states round about.

Nevertheless, even following this rebellion against the covenant God—a rebellion which makes even the apostasy under the judges seem piffling—Israel's history does not come to an end. Yahweh condescends to heed his people and he himself establishes a king for it (1 Sam. 12:13*b*). Indeed, in David he chooses the king as his king and at the same time chooses Jerusalem as the place where the name of Yahweh will find a dwelling (1 Kings 8:16). Both of these enactments are completely new elements in history. They follow upon Israel's rebellious protest against Yahweh's kingship.

But this new ordering of history does not occur without further ado any more than it did in the time of the judges. The continuation

of Samuel's farewell speech in 1 Samuel 12:14-15 demonstrates this. Israel is admonished to remain, along with her king, under subjection to Yahweh and to listen to his voice. In a thunderstorm at the time of the wheat harvest Israel comes to know the judgment upon her rebellion (vss. 17-18). Then Israel entreats Samuel to intercede with Yahweh:

> Pray for your servants to Yahweh, your God, that we may not die. For we added to all our sins this wrong, to desire a king for ourselves [vs. 19].

Israel knows that her end has been deserved. Thereupon Samuel's assurance of salvation occurs:

> Do not be afraid! To be sure, you have done this wrong. . . . But Yahweh will not cast away his people for his great name's sake, because it has pleased Yahweh to make you his people [vss. 20,22].

The time of the judges does not return any more than the time of Joshua had returned earlier. History, in its reciprocal movement between Yahweh's word and Israel's conduct, is irreversible. And the salvation history never breaks off, even amid the catastrophe brought down by apostasy and by Yahweh's judgments—though that history does seem to stand still for a moment. The reversal of judgment is again initiated by Israel's cry to Yahweh. That is shown by this second deep incision into the course of Israel's history, which, mutatis mutandis, corresponds perfectly to the first one. The cry represents an appeal for Yahweh's watchful compassion on his people; and this compassion brings Israel under new enactments and into an entirely new phase of her salvation history.

In DtrH's own time the third and last phase of Israel's history, namely that of her national existence, came to its end. Ever since King Manasseh's apostasy it was irrevocable that Judah also, as was true of Israel, would be rejected, including Jerusalem, the chosen city, and the house where Yahweh's name dwelled[22]. But that judgment, now carried out, and conclusive as it seems, is merely one more in the chain of historical reversals, and there is no reason to think that it, too, will not be reversed, if the people repent. Therefore, to maintain that Yahweh, in DtrH's eyes, wanted

to pass final judgment on Israel's history, and irredeemably end it, is really to overstate the case. To be sure, this judgment does appear especially harsh. The state of Israel, the state of Judah, and even the chosen city are rejected. But who can say whether a completely new phase could not come about, again with wholly new enactments for Yahweh's own people, as had been true after the earlier rejections? Why otherwise would DtrH have reached back so far and presented such a steady chain of reversals?

However, amid this hour of deepest catastrophe, there is not much brief for teaching hope. Noth has pointed out with complete justification that such an intention, if it exists, would have to be recognizable in the great speeches[23]. But still, if Judges 2 and 1 Samuel 12 are to be believed, there is yet room for hope: the cry to Yahweh, with a confession of guilt, a prayer for deliverance, and a willingness to give renewed obedience, may be efficacious again.

III

If a summons to such is the true and actual kerygma of DtrH, then it should appear clearly not only at the main junctures of history but should also be in full view elsewhere in the great speeches. Is this the case?

Judges 2:11ff. and 1 Samuel 12 have just shown us how decisive a role for the continuation of salvation history was played by Israel's turning to Yahweh. In 1 Samuel 12 the return occurs as the result of a pointed admonition speech by Samuel (vss. 14-15). Indeed, we find the theme "return" in almost all of the important passages which enable us to recognize DtrH's intention. On the other hand, nowhere do we encounter an encouragement to hope.

The catchword *shûb* for "return" is found as early as 1 Samuel 7:3 in Samuel's address:

> If you want to return [*shâbîm*] to Yahweh with all your heart then remove the foreign gods and the Ashtarts from your midst and direct your heart to Yahweh and serve him alone, so that he will rescue you out of the hand of the Philistines.

Israel obeys and experiences deliverance in the trouble with the Philistines.

In a decisive passage, 2 Kings 17, where DtrH pauses to meditate on the end of the state of Israel, he summarizes (vs. 13) the message of Yahweh spoken "by all prophets and seers of Israel and Judah" as the single word *shûbû!*

> Turn back [*shûbû*] from your evil ways and observe my commandments and statutes strictly according to the instruction which I gave to your fathers and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

Because the call to return and thereby also the covenant made with the fathers (vs. 15) were ignored, the final judgment upon Israel took place. It is not so much the total apostasy which makes the judgment final as the contemptuous disregard of the call to return.

A return will reverse the judgment, though it might already have been decreed. This is shown by DtrH in the case of one who is for him the brightest figure in all of Israel's history, Josiah (2 Kings 23:25):

> There had never been a king like him, who turned [*shāb*] to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, completely in accordance with the instruction of Moses; and after him there arose no one like him.

He is not depicted as the faithful one who never yielded to apostasy. Neither is he shown as one trusting in a word of promise. Rather, he is presented precisely, and only, as the one who returned.

Thus the theme "return" appears at important highpoints of the Deuteronomic presentation of history, and it thereby demonstrates through different examples what Israel should hear and do under judgment in the exile.

But could it be that this idea of return is still subordinate to DtrH's emphasis on judgment for the time of the apostasy?

IV

In order to answer this question I must ask another: does DtrH state specifically what Israel should do in the hour of judg-

ment? Yes, he does, and a passage of particular prominence—Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple.

The catchword *shûb* occurs in the prayer no less than four times. First of all, in 1 Kings 8:33 and 35 where the thought is found that Israel might be defeated by an enemy or might be the victim of a drought "because they have sinned against thee." In both instances it is said:

> If they turn back to thee and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication to thee in this house, then hear thou in heaven and forgive the sin of thy people.

These two instances confirm first of all only that to return is the imperative of the hour for DtrH whenever judgment takes place because of apostasy, as we have already seen in Judges 2:1; 1 Samuel 7 and 12; and indirectly in 2 Kings 17 and 23:25.

But does this imperative also obtain for the hour in which Israel now finds herself, far from her destroyed sanctuary? The prayer at the dedication of the temple gives (in 1 Kings 8:46-53) a precise answer to this and does so with marked detail:

> If they sin against thee . . . and thou art angry with them, and dost give them to an enemy, so that their conquerors carry them away to the land of the enemy, far or near, and they take it [punishment] to heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent [*w^eshābû*] and make supplication to thee in the land of their captivity and say, "We have sinned and have acted perversely, we have been ungodly," and if they turn to thee [*weshābû 'ēlekā*] with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemy, and pray to thee, in the direction of their land which thou didst give to their fathers, and towards the city which thou hast chosen, and towards the house which I have built for thy name, then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication.

This passage has for two reasons extraordinary importance for our question about the actual kerygma of DtrH. In the first place, it stands at a turning point—at the introduction to the third major phase of Israel's history. And second, in this passage explicitly DtrH shows his concern for the judgment now overtaking Israel, and he thereupon expressly takes up the question, what should Israel do in this hour? Martin Noth has properly pointed out

that, if DtrH had wanted to give rein to hope for any "dawning new future," it is precisely in this passage that he would have done it[24]. But on the other hand DtrH does *not* say that this judgment, collapse and exile, cataclysmic as it is, is final, or that Israel can do nothing more than submit to it as just and hopeless. No, he says a third thing, and leaves open the possibility of hope: the cry to Yahweh is once more necessary. The confession of guilt, and so, the acknowledgement of Yahweh's justice, belong to a returning with all one's heart and with all one's soul (vs. 48). But the prayer does not only point backward to a history, the final ending of which is recognized as just. It is true that the emphasis is not on what follows, but it is nevertheless expected, without being expressed in definite hopes, that Israel will once more be heard, and find pity among the nations as "Yahweh's people and possession." (vs. 51) The imperative at the moment is to turn back to Yahweh with all one's heart and all one's soul. This turning back, however, is regarded even here as a change to a new phase in the history of salvation.

V

There are yet two other passages within the DtrH where the question of what to do in the exile is raised. Both passages provide the same answer—return to Yahweh, your God!—and both appear within the Moses speeches in Deuteronomy. This may mean that DtrH wanted Israel to read his whole work from its beginning as a summons to return in the midst of judgment. But here we are faced with the difficult literary-critical question whether the two passages present us with DtrH's own formulations.

The first and more detailed passage, Deuteronomy 30:1-10, is considered by Martin Noth to belong to the older components of Deuteronomy. These he sees represented in 4:44-30:20. In his opinion, they should not be related too closely to DtrH but were, rather, taken over by DtrH as a whole[25].

Now Deuteronomy 30:1-10 presupposes at first sight the same situation in the exile as 1 Kings 8:46 ff. Here too, it is asked, what should be done now that the sentence of judgment has been carried out? And here too, it is answered with the catchword *shûb*, "return," which is repeated three times (vss. 2, 8, 10):

> When someday all these words come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you take it to heart among all the nations where Yahweh your God has expelled you, and you turn back [*w^e^shabtā*] to Yahweh your God, and you listen to his voice according to all that I command you this day, [vs. 3] then Yahweh, your God, will turn your fortunes around and have compassion upon you . . . [vs. 7] and Yahweh will lay all the curses upon your persecutors . . . [vs. 8] But you shall turn back [*tāshûb*] and listen to the voice of Yahweh, and keep all his commandments which I am today giving you. . . . [vs. 9] Yahweh will again take delight in you for your best, as he took delight in your fathers, if you listen to the word of Yahweh, your God, so that you keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of instruction —if you [this is said once more as a summary at the conclusion under the main catch word] turn back [*tāshûb*] to Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Even a preliminary analysis shows that 30:1-10 with its formulations in the singular is to be attached to chapter 28 with its theme of blessing and curse (I omit chapter 29 because of its use of the plural). The introduction—"when all these words come upon thee[26]"—reaches back recognizably to the introductory words of blessing and curse in 28:2 ("When thou hearest . . . all these blessings shall come upon thee") and 28:15 ("when thou dost not hear . . . all of these curses will come upon thee"). Cf. also verse 45. More specifically, the promise of Yahweh's abundant gifts in 30:9*a* takes up the exact wording of 28:11*a*, and the statement about Yahweh's delight in Israel in 30:9*b* consciously refers back to 28:63. Neither of these statements is found in this formulation anywhere else in DtrH, but the latter one is still to be seen in Jeremiah 32:41. Deuteronomy 30:1-10, therefore, unquestionably presupposes chapter 28—all of it, even the exilic additions in 28:45ff.

In this connection, a comparison of the formulation, "listen to the voice of Yahweh, thy God, to keep his commandments and statutes" (30:10*a*) shows that 30:1-10 stands closer to the addition 28:45ff. (cf. 45*b*) than to the older text (cf. 28:1,15). In addition, both 28:45ff. and 30:1-10 themselves presuppose the written

"book of this instruction" (compare 30:10 with 28:58,61). For this reason the only question can be whether 30:1-10 was formulated at the same time as 28:45ff. or later.

Now 30:1-10 reveals some peculiar linguistic elements which occur neither in chapter 28 nor anywhere else in DtrH but which, rather, are thoroughly characteristic of the Jeremiah traditions. Notice only the following: *ndh,hiphil* for "dispersing" in verse 1 appears often in Jeremiah (16:15; 32:37; and 46:28 in the same connection as here); *shûb sh^{e}bûh* (vs. 3) in Jeremiah 29:14; 30:3, 18 and elsewhere; *qbṣ, piel* in verses 3-4 for the gathering of the dispersed in Jeremiah 23:3; 29:14; 32:37; the circumcision of the heart in verse 6 in Jeremiah 4:4*b* and 9:25-26; the "delight of Yahweh" in Jeremiah 32:41 as well as Deuteronomy 28:63 and 30:9. Together with this last very typical expression there are still others which in the appendage to the curses (28:45ff.) recall the Jeremiah traditions. I mention as the most striking in 28:49 "the nation from afar whose language thou dost not understand" (= Jer. 5:15), and in 28:53 the description of extreme distress when people consume the flesh of their sons and daughters (= Jer. 19:9). Thus words of threat in 28:45ff. are taken over from the Jeremiah tradition, while 30:1-10 makes use of salvation words of the Jeremiah tradition. This indicates that 28:45ff. and 30:1-10 go back to the same author, who in these sections closely followed the Jeremiah traditions.

There are also in our Deuteronomy passage several close connections with DtrH. The most impressive connection is with 1 Kings 8:46ff., through the use of the rare expression, "to take something to heart" (*hēshîb el-lēb* in Deut. 30:1*b* and in 1 Kings 8:47*a*; compare also *hākînû l^{e}bab^{e}kem el yahweh* in 1 Sam. 7:3). The expression which speaks of the "love for Yahweh for the sake of your life" (30:6*b*) is found in similar form in Joshua 23:11, and the phrase about the "coming of the words" (30:1) in Joshua 23:14. It is also especially instructive at this point to recall the frequent appearance of *shûb* at the climaxes of DtrH. In this connection one needs to compare the peculiar correspondence between man's return and Yahweh's return in 30:2f., 9f. and 2 Kings 23:25f. Finally, mention should be made of the frequent references

to "this book of instruction" in 30:10 as well as in Joshua. 1:8; 23:6; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 17:37; 23:3, 24f., the last example being the most notable.

All in all, the language of Deuteronmy 30:1-10 (and 28:45ff.) shows clearer harmony with the Jeremiah traditions than with the later DtrH elements, with the possible exception of 1 Kings 8:46ff. We may maintain as our tentative results: (1) Deuteronomy 30:1-10 belongs in content and language with 28:45ff. (2) Both of the sections have been influenced by the Jeremiah traditions. (3) Both nevertheless have affinities with the language of DtrH. (4) And both emphasize the theme "return" as the summons of DtrH for his day.

Manifestly, the two passages did not belong to any earlier body of material; they are contemporary with the DtrH. The question is only, were these sections composed by the Deuteronomic historian? If so—and Martin Noth would have us believe so[27]—then we must assume that the historian enriched his picture of Moses by including Jeremiah traditions, and these inclusions account for the changes in language from the other speeches in DtrH. Or should we, on the contrary, assume a *second* writer from the deuteronomic circle, who carried the theme of the history work specifically back into Moses' time in order to insure that the entire work would be read and taken to heart in his own day[28]?

I am inclined toward the latter view. A parallel instance also suggests it. The two parts of Deuteronomy 4:25-31 are clearly by two different authors: verses 25-28 employ the plural while verses 29-31 use the singular. And, further, the second part (vss. 29-31) is clearly by the same author as 30:1-10 and 28:45ff. So if, as Noth suggests[29], the first part is by DtrH, then the second part (as well as 30:1-10 and 28:45ff.) cannot be by him, but must be by someone else, who was trying to graft not only DtrH kerygma but also Jeremiah traditions onto the older material of Deuteronomy. Let us consider this second part (4:29-31) and its authorship more closely:

> Then from there thou shalt seek Yahweh thy God and shalt find him, if thou askest for him with all thy heart and all thy soul. When thou art in trouble and all these words are

> come upon thee in the last days, then thou wilt turn back [*w^eshabtā*] to Yahweh thy God and listen to his voice. For Yahweh thy God is a merciful God. He will not abandon or destroy thee and will not forget the convenant which he promised by oath to thy fathers.

Thematically, of course, this passage flows directly from the one before it (vss. 25-28); but the use of the singular sets it clearly apart. On the other hand, in both matter and style it is absolutely uniform with 30:1-10. Verse 29 takes over words of the Jeremiah tradition (Jer. 29:13); verse 30 recalls Hosea (3:5; 5:15); *shûb* is constructed only here (vs. 30) and in 30:2 with *'ad* (*yahweh*), otherwise never in DtrH (30:10, as usual, has *'el*). Here, too, the text speaks of the "fulfillment of all those words." (4:30; cf. 30:1) If 4:39 belongs to the same addition, then the reappearance there of the expression *hēshîb el lēbab* ("take it to heart") is a significant recollection of 30:1 and 1 Kings 8:47.

The close thematic and linguistic relationship between 4:29-31 and 30:1-10 suggests they are both part of one author's effort to mesh Deuteronomy with DtrH. I concede, however, that this deutero-DtrH, this second author, is still just a hypothesis. Final clarity can only be obtained by a new and urgently needed examination, on the basis of Deuteronomy 28-30 and Deuteronomy 4, of the literary interconnection of Deuteronomy and DtrH.

If the deutero-DtrH hypothesis is correct, however, it means that more than just one writer in the deuteronomic circle found the call for a return to be the one of utmost moment for his own day. Indeed, the second writer found it so momentous that he proclaimed it twice over—before and after the incorporation of Deuteronomy—as the decisive and final word of Moses for the generation of the exiles. Thereby the reader was directed from the start to a proper understanding of the entire work. Much later that work would present King Solomon, in the prayer at the temple's dedication, as the great advocate of the return, and Josiah, the last model king, as the shining example of proper return.

VI

The question, how the return as proclaimed by DtrH was to take place, can be discussed here only briefly.

1. It should occur as an unqualified turning to Yahweh in prayer. Judges 2:16; 3:9; 1 Samuel 12:19; and 1 Kings 8:47 reveal this most clearly. Included are a confession of guilt, a plea for deliverance, and a willingness to renew obedience.

2. Such a return includes a "listening to the voice of Yahweh, your God, according to the instruction of Moses" and listening to the continued reminders of the prophets. The example of Josiah in 2 Kings 23:25 and the summary of prophetic preaching in 2 Kings 17:13 point to this. This means first of all the removal of foreign gods, as is shown especially in 1 Samuel 7:3 and also in 2 Kings 23:24. In Deuteronomy 4:30 and 30:2, 8, 10 "turning back" and "listening to the voice of Yahweh" have become an indissoluble combination.

3. The non-cultic character of the return is noteworthy. The passionate concern for warding off the foreign cults shows no corresponding positive interest in carrying out certain Yahweh rituals. This is especially true of the Jerusalem temple. In all essentials it is only a place of prayer, and nearness to it is never required—in the exile it is enough to turn in its direction[30]. DtrH has in mind essentially a service of prayer, wherein everything depends on a turning to Yahweh's voice itself as it became known through Moses and the prophets.

4. It is especially the second writer from the deuteronomic circle, recognizable in Deuteronomy 4:29-31 and 30:1-10, who clearly demonstrates that DtrH considers the return to be less a human deed and more a psychological event, promised by Yahweh, that will follow after his judgment upon them. The return is thus promised in 4:29f. for the time of affliction, in close parallel with Hosea's and Jeremiah's words of promise[31]. In 30:8 too, the return is plainly part of the promise. The presupposition in 4:30f. as in 30:2f. is Yahweh's watchful compassion—he, for his part, will never forget the covenant affirmed by oath with the fathers (4:31). To be sure, since the time is close when Yahweh's compassion will break through, 30:1f. and 10 put more emphasis on the conditional character of the return; but it is nevertheless maintained that "Yahweh *will* circumcise the heart." (vs. 6) Thus the return in 4:30, as well as in the corresponding redaction in Hosea 3:5, con-

stitutes in fact the eschatological salvation "at the end of the days."[32]

Because of this stress on Yahweh's agency, DtrH preaching lacks the character of legalistic urging. The deuteronomic historians educate their contemporaries towards the expected return by their tremendous and most patiently developed picture of salvation history —an ongoing history, of which the present generation is the living part. To return, to turn back to the covenant with the fathers which Yahweh still has not forgotten is all that remains for Israel to do. In the time of affliction it offers the only possibility for salvation.

Thus the work serves as an urgent invitation to a return to the God of salvation history. This third kerygma in the Old Testament writings grows out of the "emotion of praise and of remorse" in terms of which Israel otherwise spoke of her history[33].

VII

In all of this one cannot say that DtrH combined his idea of return with any *specific* hope. Considering his open-ended view of history, concretes and predictables would be absurd. As in the days of the judges and the kings one should, rather, count on completely new arrangements by Yahweh. Only Deuteronomy 30:4 (Engl. 30:5) speaks of a return to the land; 1 Kings 8:49f. confines itself to a prayer for justice and mercy for the people of God among the foreign nations. The humility associated with the return stands in the way of any specific hopes. 1 King 8 speaks just as little of a new king as it does of a return home. The king has come under judgment along with Israel and her national state. When Jehoiachin is allowed to take off his prison garments this means little more than that God is still acting for his people. Thus DtrH has recorded this event out of respect for the facts. He does not, however, attach any messianic hopes to it. Messianic hopes are perhaps what Jeremiah's opponents, such as Hananiah saw in the event: they had been waiting so long for the king's return that their hopes had become delirious[34]. As a disciple of Jeremiah DtrH is much more reserved.

Perhaps one of the wholly new arrangements is to be the office of witness which the people of God will occupy in the midst of the nations, just as Jehoiachin remains in a distant land, eating at the

royal table as long as he lives, enjoying a strange preeminence above the other kings (2 Kings 25:28-29). The ruined temple will in any case become a witness for the God of Israel among the nations (1 Kings 9:8-9). Whoever prays there will, according to Solomon's intercession, be heard, even if he is a foreigner from a far country, "in order that all the nations may know thy name." (1 Kings 8:41-43) These new arrangements, however, are hidden and cannot be fitted at all into a program of hope.

By contrast, Israel must expect, even when she turns back, to remain in affliction for "many days." DtrH points to such a possibility at the very beginning of his work in his picture of the generation of Moses (Deut. 1:45-46). The return cannot be thought of as a ticket to restoration or betterment.

Deuteronomy 29:28 (Engl. 29:29) expresses this with great clarity[35]:

> That which is still hidden [i.e., in the future] belongs to Yahweh; but that which has been revealed [i.e., the past] concerns us and our children forever, that we may carry out all the words of his instruction.

This revealed word now contains the summons to return (in the text of Deuteronomy that summons follows immediately). To return means that Israel will listen with her whole heart to the voice of her God alone and expect every good from him alone in order that she may become God's agent in the midst of all nations. This is, if I understand it correctly, the peculiar interest of this first comprehensive history not only the Old Testament but of world literature.

6

THE KERYGMA OF THE PRIESTLY WRITERS[1]

by Walter Brueggemann

In the three remarkable articles just previous, H. W. Wolff has explored the kerygmatic focus of three of the Pentateuchal sources, the Yahwist, Elohist, and the Deuteronomic historian. To the present he has not yet published a fourth paper on the kerygma of the Priestly author to round out the sequence, though that may be forthcoming. The present paper seeks to make a contribution to this latter subject and will attempt to follow Wolff's general procedure. In each of the three articles Wolff has been able to isolate a frequently used formula as the clue to the tradition under discussion[2]. Moreover, in each case he has been able to relate that formula to the historical situation and theological issues that the author faced[3].

The critical judgments concerning the Priestly tradition are for now generally agreed upon. The Priestly tradition is the most distinctive and self-conscious tradition among those in the so-called documentary hypothesis. It is the most easily recognizable and is the best candidate for being referred to as a "document."[4] It prefers its own vocubulary and style and projects its own scheme for understanding world history and the history of Israel[5]. It is generally dated either to the exile or to the nearly postexilic period[6] and is understood as a group of traditions which regarded cultic matters as primary for reconstructing the community of faith now characterized as Judaism. It is assumed on all sides that while older materials are certainly utilized, the intention of the completed form is to provide a basis and legitimacy for the cultic apparatus around which the community was to cluster in its restored condition.

The literary components of the Priestly tradition can be easily

summarized. While there are detailed variations most of the material can be subsumed under three headings:

(a) Laws and regulations related to proper ordering of the cultic apparatus. It is this which is best known and most studied about P and which has most often been regarded as its focus[7]. This comprises the bulk of detailed and tedious material in Exodus 25–31 and 35–40, Leviticus and Numbers 1–10. While a variety of strata are represented[8], the concerns included have common focus in a cult which makes possible interaction between holy God and his people.

(b) Genealogies, which manifest the P tradition's concern for purity, symmetry, legitimacy, and order[9]. The repeated recital of names strikes modern readers as boring or curious, but in the minds of the authors they linked present concerns to past resources and roots. This was surely no small matter in a historical context of rootlessness.

(c) Narrative elements, scattered through the Pentateuch, each of them very carefully placed. These narratives, in contrast to the primitive power of the Yahwist's stories, generally have little dynamic or movement but are transparently vehicles of a message. In their function they are not unlike the fiction writing of C. P. Snow in which chapter headings give clear hints of the message of each unit and the story exists for the message. These narratives again reflect P's remarkable discipline and self-consciousness.

The total construction of P apparently stretches from the creation to the completion of Moses' work. The end of the tradition is exceedingly difficult to locate, and that difficulty is linked to the complex question of Tetrateuch-Pentateuch-Hexateuch[10]. It has been held that P materials are found in Joshua but that is now a most doubtful judgment[11], seemingly related to the effort to connect all Hexateuchal materials to one of the four "literary" sources, as of course they cannot be. (It can also be argued that P had an extended conquest narrative but that it was displaced when DtrH was linked to the Tetrateuch. Such an argument from silence is precarious at best.) For reasons which will appear later, it is here assumed that P stops with the work of Moses, that it contains no conquest narrative[12]. This corresponds to the evidence of literary analysis and

supports the theological judgment which will be presented in the following discussion.

I

Consistent with Wolff, I begin my analysis with what appears to be the central kerygmatic assertion which the material seeks to address to its contemporaries (for Wolff: *Aussagewillen, Verkündigungsabsicht*). This assertion, as in the other traditions, may be identified as a set formula which recurs in the material at crucial places. It is possible to understand P from the standpoint of any of the three components we have noted. While most studies have stressed the legal corpus, I will focus here on the narratives[13]. Within these, I suggest, the formidable blessing declaration in Genesis 1:28 provides a focus for understanding the kerygma of the whole work[14]:

> And God blessed them and God said to them:
> Be fruitful and multiply; and fill the earth
> and subdue it and have dominion . . . [RSV].

These five verbs, I submit, are the central message in the faith of the Priestly circle. While other matters are important and are presented with equal care, here we are at the heart of the confessional affirmation which is correctly called kerygmatic. The use of the name Elohim, twice repeated here, is well known in P, and fits the revelatory scheme culminating in Moses' revelation (Ex. 6:3-13). But the name also reflects the grand sweep and universal scope of P's affirmation[15].

The "blessing" is a bold and overpowering affirmation in which the sovereign's intent is clear. While the verbs are expressed as imperatives, they are not so much commands as authorizations[16] by which the people are empowered to believe and act toward the future. Thus the five verbs assert God's radical intention to promote well-being and prosperity. And that intent cannot be frustrated by any circumstance, not even such a circumstance as the traditionist's context of exile. God's claim to sovereignty (according to the text) is over the creation which he has just called into being out of *chaos*. Historically his claim refers to the *exilic situation* of

poverty, defeat, and despair which he now transforms into a situation of joy and shalom. These five assertions complete the creation of humankind, affirming its primacy and ordaining it as the agent of order in his world which he now wills to be fertile and productive.

Perhaps the five terms are best understood if each is taken as a refutation of the opposite:

be fruitful	no more barrenness[17]
multiply	no more lack of heirs[18]
fill the earth	no more being crowded out
subdue	no more subservience
have dominion	no more being dominated[19].

This proclamation is strikingly appropriate to a people of exile who are homeless and rootless, alienated from land and traditions, an affirmation that their God is still in charge and therefore that their destiny is still well-being and dominance. Thus this word is an amazing challenge to a hopeless historical situation[20].

The full form of the blessing occurs only in Genesis 1, but it reverberates throughout the P narratives. Thus in the flood story the P narrative utilizes the same formula:

> . . . that they may breed abundantly[21] on the earth
> and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth [8:17]. . . .
> and God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them,
> "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth [9:1]. . . .
> And you,
> be fruitful and multiply,
> bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply[22] in it
> [9:7, all vss. RSV][22].

The first of these concerns, birds and animals, has a counterpart in 1:22 in the earlier creation account. The second develops in a remarkable direction, for the next statement is, "The fear and dread of you shall be . . . ." This language resonates with the command to subdue and have dominion, and it seems to echo the old conquest statements about terror when the powerful community led by Yahweh seizes the land[23]. The third use of the formula here is closely linked to the initial statement of Genesis 1:26-30, for this one also follows a statement about man in "the image of God." Rendtorff has written about the turn in the J narrative at 8:22[24]. In parallel fashion,

the announcement makes a turn in P, for it is new creation after the flood. It is a new creation again being wrought out of chaos. If, as I argue elsewhere, the mythical symbol of chaos corresponds to the historical experience of exile, then the statement of P is an announcement of the end of exile and the return in success to the land. Noteworthy is the repeated reference to "the earth," which can as well be translated "the land." Thus in all three statements (8:17; 9:1; 9:7), stress is laid on the promise that blessing will be realized in the form of land[25]. That of course strikes a plangent note to the exiled community, for to them restoration to the land was a most urgent hope. The formula clearly is concerned with the proper and joyous use of the land, urging that for which land is intended, namely to be fruitful and to control it[26]. Again, the blessing is precisely the antithesis of the experience of the exilic community.

The third use of the formula is Genesis 17:20[27]. In a speech about Ishmael it is said:

> Behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly . . . I will make him a great nation [RSV].

While the statement is not directly about Israel but about Ishmael, it is pertinent to our discussion. First, verse 21 suggests an even greater promise to Isaac. Second, perhaps in the sixth century, the promise of God concerns restoration of all the Abraham-derived people from Babylonian subservience. And even restoration of the Ishmael people stresses the power and fidelity of God. While the Ishmael theme is handled out of regard for the old tradition, it is clearly subordinated to the Isaac promise with which P is concerned. As the unit stands, the formula indirectly reinforces the promise to Abraham in 17:2:

> . . . will multiply you exceedingly [RSV].

The next use of the formula is in 28:1-4[28]:

> God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you
> that you may become a company of peoples [vs. 3, RSV].

This text stresses the purity of the holy people, a theme for which P is noted. But it also reiterates the land interest, "that you may take

possession of the land of your sojournings." (vs. 4, RSV)[29] The exiled people are again promised roots, stability, prosperity. The unit is a good example of the way old traditions serve as sources and resources for present faith affirmations. The old sojourn memories are now a source of hope for land possession.

The same formula is addressed to Jacob again in 35:11 and again it is linked to recovery of the land. While the statement contains no new elements, it is a convenient place to note the recurrence of three elements together:

a) the mention of 'El Shaddai who is the agent of the kerygma[30];
b) the formula derived from 1:28, which we take as the central element in the kerygma;
c) the reference to land possession which is the goal of the kerygma[31].

The name of God is linked to if not subordinated to the command/promise of fruitfulness and prosperity and the promise of land. While the name of God is important for the schematic history of P, it has probably been overstressed by scholars at the expense of the blessing and anticipation of land. P is not as interested in a theory of revelation as the reality of land-promise which survives even for the exiles. It is when the name is linked with the other two elements (verbs of the formula, and land-promise) that it takes on importance and power for the tradition. Without the other elements linked to it, the name has little power for the tradition[32].

In 47:27 the formula is less complete, for the deity's name is not mentioned and the familiar words, "fruitful and multiply" are not given in prospect, but only as a report on what has already happened. But consistently Israel is the fruitful people. Moreover, this verse also mentions land and possession[33], even if the focus is not the land in Canaan. A changed locus is required by the circumstances of the story. That Israel is here fruitful in Egypt affirms for P that Israel is consistently and inevitably a fruitful people, i.e., undeniably destined to control land. Whether in Israel or anywhere else, this people controls the land and prospers—a remarkable affirmation for exiles!

The full formula again occurs in 48:3-4 with the divine name, the command/promise and the reference to land possession. This

occurrence rounds off the patriarchal narratives, which have seen the affirmation made to Abraham and in anticipation Isaac (17:20-21), Jacob (28:3; 35:11), and now to Joseph (47:27; 48:4).

The P tradition does not carry the theme into the Mosaic era, perhaps because the legislative material is predominant there. But in Exodus 1:1-5, 7, a transition is made:

> But the descendants of Israel were
> fruitful and increased greatly;
> they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong
> so that the land was filled with them [vs. 7, RSV].

The statement stands not simply as an introduction to the exodus materials, though it is certainly that, but as a programmatic statement for the entire remaining history of the people. The theme stretches from creation to liberation, from the blessing announced to its realization—which is the perennial story in Israel and the stress which P wishes to make. God does keep his promise. He is powerful and the people do prosper in the land. They are not yet in the land, but signs of the realization of Yahweh's promise are already apparent. In the sequence of speeches concerning 'El Shaddai we came finally to the climactic one in Exodus 6:2-4 where the terms of the formula of Genesis 1:28 are not employed. But characteristically the unit moves from the name to the land (vss. 3, 4, 8).

II

Now when we look more closely at the formula of P, it appears to be a self-conscious and original creation. In its present form it has no antecedents. But its component parts were at hand in the old land traditions preserved especially in Deuteronomic materials. (Here I will not consider any possible interaction between the Deuteronomic historian and the P circle, but refer to older traditions embedded in Deuteronomy.) I suggest that P's kerygma has been made from old land-possession traditions dating from Israel's first entry into Canaan[34].

Most obvious among these is God's promise to bring Israel into the land and multiply her (Deut. 6:3; 7:13; 8:1, 13; 11:21; 28:63; 30:16). Multiplying in the land is offered as a sign of divine

approval and of well-being[35]. Deuteronomy does not speak of being fruitful but does speak of productivity (6:11; 8:6-9; and especially 7:13-14) in most eloquent terms. I understand "be fruitful" and "fill the earth" as parallels to "multiply," which has its roots in the old tradition but which was developed by P to provide symmetry and repetition characteristic of that tradition.

The other two terms of the full formula, "subdue" and "have dominion," are not derived in any specific way from the older tradition but they surely reflect the intention and mind-set of the land-taking tradition. That of course is precisely why "conquest" takes place, to drive out, defeat, subjugate, or destroy the former inhabitants and take control. The term "subdue" is used in Numbers 32:22, 29; and Joshua 18:1. The relation of these texts to P is obscure. If they are from P the term stretches from Genesis 1:28 to Numbers and Joshua, showing the close connection between both the language and theme of creation and conquest. If they are not P, and I assume they are not, then P has appropriated conquest language for his own affirmation[36]. Either way *creation comes to be expressed in conquest language*. The earth (land) ordered in Genesis 1 for human occupation, use and control, is the same land (earth) referred to in the conquest traditions. Such a conclusion is supported by the additional statement of Genesis 9:2 that there will be fear and dread of the blessed people, much like the dread felt by Israel's later enemies (cf. Ex. 1:12) as Israel became strong and extended herself.

There can be little doubt about this formula in P:

1. It pervades the P material:
   the full formula given to Adam (Gen. 1:28)
   the partial formula given in turn to:
   Noah (Gen. 8:17; 9:1, 7)
   Abraham (Gen. 17:2, 20-21)
   Jacob (Gen. 28:3-4; 35:11)
   Joseph (Gen. 47:27; 48:3-4)
   the generation of Moses (Ex. 1:7).

Thus the formula carries the P narrative from creation into the Promised Land.

2. The formula is clearly related to land theology. This is indicated in that (a) the formula is characteristically combined with

the promise of land, and (b) the vocabulary of the formula has to do with blessing in and control of the land:

"fruitful and multiply":	refers to fertility and reproduction not only of man, but also of land and animals.
"subdue, have dominion":	refers to having control over the land, of power to impose one's will on the territory.
"fill":	again refers to prosperity.

The thread running through P therefore concerns the promise of and gift of land as a blessing. And the moment when the word is spoken is precisely the moment of *landlessness,* the exile. Thus it is a radical affirmation against the circumstances in which it is spoken.

III

If we are to understand the formula, we shall need to focus on its fullest expression in Genesis 1. It is most plausible to suppose that the other uses are derived from this one and are to be interpreted as the realization of this one in history. In Genesis 1:1–2:4*a,* this formula occupies a central position between the rest of creation and the Sabbath, which suggests it may well be the focus of the text. It is of course true that the unit contains many parts derived from and parallel to ancient Near Eastern materials[37]. It is also evident that the unit concludes with an etiology for the Sabbath[38]. But it is neither the creation narrative nor the introduction of the Sabbath which shapes the P narrative. It is precisely this radical word, spoken with unchallengeable authority, which gives P its shape and character. Our analysis of the P formula suggests that Genesis 1:1–2:4*a* must be interpreted in the context of the total intention of the P narrative. Too often this unit has been treated in a vacuum, and that has led to misunderstanding. When the creation narrative is related to the rest of the P tradition, there can be no doubt that the fivefold word of blessing is the heart of the text.

The language of this formula, as we have indicated, is reminiscent of the *old conquest traditions.* Those traditions had several important affirmations to make, but ones not always easy to harmonize.

They include: (a) the land is a *gift* from Yahweh; (b) the land will be taken by Israel's *conquest*; (c) the land is a place of blessing; (d) the land will be *lost* if Israel is unfaithful. As von Rad has indicated[39], in the old credo and in the J structure of the Hexateuch, entrance into the Promised Land is the completion of the history of salvation. When that story gets reshaped to serve the needs of the exilic community[40], we can assume it contains two elements: (1) fidelity to the old materials it utilizes, and (2) freedom to reshape those materials for contemporary needs. The old materials of course include the whole structure of promise-fulfillment focusing on the land[41], and that idea controls how P uses the old traditions. Land theology dominates DtrH (presumably somewhat earlier than P[42]) just as much. Thus conquest as gift and as command is at the center of the already existing tradition which P employs. They are held together formally in Deuteronomy as paranesis and commandment.

The problem of the exilic community which P addresses was the community's rootlessness and its being displaced, i.e., they were people without land. Common opinion is that P in a rather static fashion sought to legitimize cultic practices, which would help the community endure the landless situation of exile. Without denying that, I submit P was also future-oriented, looking to the time when the land would be received again from God, reentry be made, control again be exercised, fertility be celebrated, the promise of God activated: he looked to the time when Israel would again experience blessing and well-being in the new conquest, as their fathers had done in the old.

It has been noted that II Isaiah makes as much of creation as P[43]. It is also well known that II Isaiah makes much of return to the land. What is claimed for II Isaiah is also true for P. In Genesis 1, P is not concerned with abstract affirmations about cosmic origins but about regaining the land. Thus the idea of creation is simply a vehicle for the promise and expectation of a new conquest[44], renewed blessing, because Yahweh continues to be faithful and powerful[45].

The distinctive verse Genesis 1:2 has long been recognized as having mythological precursors. But our argument suggests the verse can also be understood in political-historical terms, without of course denying its mythological antecedents. A political-historical

understanding would suggest that chaos (*tohû-bohû*) is the landless situation of exile and the hovering spirit which gives order is Yahweh's act of restoring the people their land with all its blessing and well-being. To be sure, one cannot ignore the expansive, universal horizons of the unit. But that worldwide horizon is experienced by P's contemporaries as being landless, and then landed.

Creation is thus restoration to the land. The old salvation deeds are to happen again, as Israel is secured in her Promised Land[46]. Perhaps that explains why there is no, or very little, conquest narrative in P. This has been explained in a variety of ways, most plausibly, that P's conquest narrative was displaced by DtrH. But our argument suggests other reasoning: (a) the conquest tradition is there—the old material contained it and P retains that old material; (b) but it is subdued because for P the important moment of conquest is still in the future.

Two other features in Genesis 1 should be noted: 1. The climax of Genesis 1 is the divine assertion: "It is very good." As the tradition stands the comment is related to creation. But in light of the use of *tôb* with land[47], it can also be suggested that the formula recalls the conquest and is thus a celebrative description of the land Yahweh has given his people and which they are yet to repossess. 2. The movement of the whole unit toward the Sabbath (2:1-4*a*) has been explained as characteristic of the exilic obsession with that day. But it is worth noting that Sabbath not only means the (sacred) recuperation, of men, as Heschel has said so eloquently[48], but in texts usually linked to the P materials, Sabbath also means the recuperation of the land:

> The sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired servant and for the sojourner who lives with you . . . [Lev. 25:6]
>
> Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in the enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest which it had not in your sabbaths when you dwelt upon it [Lev. 26:34-35].

Such a connection is far from clear, but it is possible that Sabbath gets drawn into Genesis 1:1–2:4*a* because of land theology and the

recovery which comes to the land and then to its restored inhabitants. It is Sabbath for the land which makes it again fruitful and productive[49].

IV

We have sought to interpret P from an angle different from many interpreters. We have suggested that narrative rather than law or genealogy is the clue to P's kerygma. If that is to be maintained then we must attempt to relate the other elements to the narrative proclamation. While we must make such a suggestion, each component must be permitted some independence so that it need not all fit together neatly in a single affirmation.

If reentry of the Promised Land is P's central affirmation, then the legal material about proper cultic provision for the meeting of holy God and sinful people is a program to insure that the land to be reentered will not be abused by erroneous or high-handed action[50]. Such actions might lead to repeated expulsion from the land—a thing which P would avoid at every cost. Indeed, the central intention of the priestly legislation is to provide that expulsion from the land will not recur. Thus the laws presume the reconquest and reentry of the land. They are guidance so that the promise and blessing of God will not be forfeited.

The genealogies are very difficult and complex. But certainly the structure of P stresses the continuity between the fathers and the present generation of exile. As relates to our hypothesis, P is at pains to hold together the ancient promise and the current projected fulfillment. And the connection between old and new means not only the generation of the conquest who first experienced fulfillment of the promise/blessing in the Moses/Joshua period, but it also refers back to the creation, for the promise of land about to be actualized is ordained in the very fabric of creation. The promise is not an event that happened along the way and became obsolete as historical events moved along. Rather it is rooted in the deepest reality—the declaration of God at creation—so that it cannot be voided by any historical eventuality, even by the exile. From all eternity God has ordained the land as blessing, and P bears witness

to that hope. The genealogies make the connection between the times of the promise and its fulfillment[51].

V

The kerygmatic key to priestly theology is that the promise of the land of blessing still endures and will be realized soon. Such a suggestion of course does not account for all the diversity in the tradition any more than Wolff has been able to account for everything in the other traditions. Nor do I mean to localize or reduce the large horizons which have been so widely credited to P. I do not suggest that creation language is simply code language for restoration to the land. P does indeed speak in terms of the whole of creation as does II Isaiah. But such language is not abstract nor does it exist in a vacuum. What I have argued is that the historical point of contact, the way in which exiled Israel experienced chaos and creation, was as exile and restoration. The mythological/cosmic and the historical/political nuances are not contradictory, but must be held together. Only so can this theology be serious for its own time and pertinent when God's ordering of life seems so impotent and precarious.

Finally, this way of presenting P's gospel seeks to appreciate the dialectic of past-tradition and present situation. The argument above (1) affirms that the priestly writers profoundly understood the needs of their contemporaries, and (2) that they penetrated to the power of the beliefs around which the Hexateuch is structured. These, together with the resources of mythological tradition also available to P, are combined into a remarkable affirmation which is not only a holding action (as P is often presented), but a potent theology of hope in which God's ordering/blessing action is still to be fully achieved (cf. Is. 45:18-19)[52].

7

THE CONTINUING TASK OF TRADITION CRITICISM

by Walter Brueggemann

While it is beyond our scope to do so, a study of the four Pentateuchal efforts to relate faith tradition to cultural crisis can shed a great deal of light on other literatures which faced the same crises. And indeed, most Old Testament literature can be viewed as a response to precisely the three sorts of crisis addressed in the Pentateuch.

A. The Four Traditions in the Pentateuch

It is generally agreed that J wrote during Israel's crisis of monarchy and secularization. There is a variety of evidence and scholarly opinion which sees the Succession Narrative of 2 Samuel 9-20, 1 Kings 1-2 as addressed to the same crisis. Older opinion, largely following Leonhard Rost's judgment[1], saw this later literature as chiefly concerned with which of David's sons would be his successor. Whence the title, Succession Narrative. But more recent scholarship has been inclined to see the literature not in terms of succession, but in terms of the struggle of north and south, or the struggle of Absalom and Solomon, or simply the basic question of royal legitimacy[2]. Taken in any of these forms, the issues concern the delicate relation between the purpose and providence of God on the one hand and human, historical power on the other. David and his family are bearers both of the promise of Yahweh and of enormous political power. Von Rad has noted how much the narrative understates the activity of God—an understatement typical of the tenth century's secularization[3]. And indeed, the growing divorce between the claims of God and the claims of royalty in the tenth

century produced a theological crisis[4]. The issue took two forms: a faith vision which was impotent and therefore irrelevant, and historical power which was undisciplined and refused accountability to any vision. The response which both J and the Succession Narrative took was atypical and strong: they struggled to take seriously both faith and power and to bring to expression ways in which the two could be held together in some responsible intellectual frame. Thus J was no isolated literary construct but an effort to deal with a real crisis of values caused by the alienation of faith from the realities of power.

Concerning E, Wolff, following Steck, has suggested the theological and historical context. E is chronologically and thematically of a piece with the protests of the northern prophets. Those prophets, especially Elijah and Hosea, issued a mighty challenge against royal pretensions, which had threatened to alter the very foundations of social life[5]. With dramatic arrogance the dynasty of Omri and Ahab began what Jeroboam II, with his more effective sharking, later nearly achieved—the reduction of the north, just as Solomon had reduced the south, to a despotic state, in league with Canaanite religion.

E, with Elijah and Hosea, denounced the practices of Canaanite religion masquerading in Yahwistic form. These syncretistic amalgams dwindled in some cases to the bald assertion that life can be controlled and is at our disposal if only we are strong enough and smart enough. And with this idea the court gladly went along—after all, the royal establishment controlled plenty of hardware, and usually had its way. It proposed to use war as imperial policy (1 Kings 22). It sought to confiscate land for royal ventures (1 Kings 21). It accommodated itself to all sorts of production-consumption values (Hos. 13:2); and the resulting prosperity was evident.

However, Elijah and Hosea in not very subtle ways make clear that such shrewd mechanization cannot bring life. In the dramatic encounter at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18), it is clear that only Yahweh's word controls history and brings life, albeit in the form of rain. In the story of Naboth's vineyard it is that same word which the regime is unable to control or resist. In one of his tersest declarations (Hos. 4:1-3), Hosea asserts that the coherence

of creation depends on knowing Yahweh's Torah—not on the devices, mechanizations, and "new ideology" of kingship. And in his most eloquent poem (2:4-13) he notes that Israel attributes Yahweh's gifts to other gods, and because of the mistaken attribution everything comes to a deathly standstill. Both of these prophets affirm the jealousy of Yahweh and the conviction that he retains unto himself the power of life. And no amount of ingenuity at combining human manipulation with divine mystery (read syncretism, synergism) can alter that fact.

Such a context lets us see E differently. For example Genesis 22, one of the central texts of E, is no longer seen as a curious piece in isolation[6], but as one part of a massive effort in the ninth-eighth centuries to assert the jealous grip Yahweh has over life and to call the faithful to trust themselves to that grip. Thus E is understood as part of a much broader effort to assert the exclusive claim of Yahweh upon his people precisely when his claim was in doubt.

To understand with any force the Deuteronomic history and the Priestly tradition, it is necessary to see their context in its full significance. The exile represents, as von Rad has shown[7], the end of a whole scheme of salvation history. The issue of the exile was a profound alienation, alienation from city and temple, from land and accustom, but most of all from Yahweh and his promises—which now seemed false. It is perhaps a wonder that the exile was a time of such enormous literary activity; but we may understand it as a quest, perhaps a desperate quest, for ways of fidelity in a setting of estrangement[8]. Gottwald[9] has stated that the Old Testament is to be understood mainly as an attempt to come to terms with the exile. Even if that is an overstatement, it properly suggests that faith is most sorely pressed and most vigorously explored when in exile. Israel was confronted with the "tragic reversal"[10] of having been blessed and now cursed, of having been remembered and now forgot, of having been loved and now abandoned.

The period's nightmare produced the grief-work of Lamentations, the rage and indignation of Job[11], the visions of Jeremiah[12], the two-pronged message of Ezekiel, and the bold, radical newness, of Isaiah 40-55. For our purposes it is useful to set DtrH and P in that context, for they represent the two poles of exilic faith, poles

which Machholz described as Protestant and Catholic. DtrH, in its call to repentance, vigorously stresses human obligation and responsibility, while P, in its royal edict, lays emphasis on the fidelity of God and the assurance of well-being even in exile. Although he uses a different conceptualization, Wolff has pursued a point not unlike that of Machholz, namely, that DtrH ("You shall be my people") and P ("I shall be your God") both explore the meaning of covenant in exile[13].

Exact correlation with other literature is not always possible or desirable, but suggestions in that direction may be illuminating. Certain parts of P have affinities with Ezekiel, in their concern for the glory of God[14], their abhorrence of what is impure, and in their bold, bald promise of newness[15]. Conversely, DtrH may have links with Lamentations[16] and Job, in their common retribution themes, and perhaps with II Isaiah, in its reliance upon the word of God as the source of life and hope[17]. The fact that two of the traditions of the Pentateuch can convincingly be assigned to the exile suggests the profundity of that crisis., Almost the whole of Israel's literature of faith is the fruit of it.

We should of course note the recent and powerful argument of Frank M. Cross, Jr.[18], that DtrH is to be dated in its major parts before the exile and was only edited in the exile. This view, which for a time was less popular because of Noth's powerful synthesis, is only now being revived. Such a view, if accepted, would of course necessitate a restatement of the point made by Wolff that P and DtrH are coeval with the exile literature. However, in the present discussion it is essential to work with Wolff's critical presuppositions, and in any case, even if Cross' view is accepted, Wolff's remarks would apply to the completed tradition as preserved for us.

The correspondence of the Pentateuchal tradition with other Old Testament literatures has important heuristic value. The similarities between J and the Succession Narrative, E and prophetic materials, and DtrH and P and the exilic literature, suggest that the Pentateuchal writings do not stand in isolation, nor can they be interpreted only as relating to each other, as is often supposed. Moreover such interrelations suggest that the issues faced by the

Pentateuchal traditions in fact pervade the whole Old Testament and constitute the basic themes of Biblical faith. So presented, the Old Testament is seen as a literature entering consistently into sharp *Auseinandersetzung* with false forms of faith urged by culture. That is, the Bible is in sharp dispute with the values and practices emerging from time to time in the community of Israel. The Bible protests against false ways of relating faith to power (J), false ways of relating human energy and competence to divine purpose (E), and false ways of believing and doubting while in alienation (DtrH, P). And if the Bible affirms and protests always in a situation of potential perversion, the task of Biblical interpretation and proclamation is sharply defined. It is itself always in an *Auseinandersetzung,* always an affirmation not believed and a protest not accepted, always an attempt to articulate a true form of gospel and to deny the false.

B. Continuation of the Traditioning Process

For reasons not entirely clear, the Pentateuch seems to have reached its final fixed form by the end of the fifth century. Perhaps its final form is related to the historical movement associated with Ezra. Somewhere in that period the Pentateuch hardened into a body of literature—no longer in dynamic interaction with culture, no longer itself, open to growth through continuation of the traditioning process. It became a canon, fixed and unchanging; but it therefore became, itself, a tradition[19].

And it is important in our understanding of Scripture to see that while this literature no longer flexibly responded to new crises, the process previously going on in the Pentateuch did not stop after the Pentateuch itself reached its fixed form. A procession of unknown persons continued the task of traditioning, i.e., of reformulating the faith in ways that made contact with new cultural forms and situations.

The most important of these was the "Chronicler," a name given to the shaper(s) of the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. As with the older traditionists in the Pentateuch, they reshaped received material in a fresh way. A study of the material has not been pursued according to Wolff's methodology, but it is

plausible on the basis of several studies to suggest that the Chronicler was responding to one of several questions[20]. First it may be that the tradition was shaped as a Jerusalem response to a Jerusalem-Samaria dispute (already evident in the older parts of the Ezra-Nehemiah narratives) to establish the primacy and legitimacy of the Jerusalem temple. Or perhaps the literature is a response to questions over messianic hopes. In support of such a view, scholars have noted the books' concern to show Davidic claims upon the faith community. A third alternative has been suggested, that the literature was written in response to a rivalry among priestly orders—specifically, a rivalry to establish the claims of the Levite order. While we lack evidence to decide about these possible purposes, it is clear that as to any of them the Chronicler was not a historiographer in any objective sense—as were none of the traditionists we have studied. Rather, he was a participant in a crucial theological debate which he sought to influence by an appeal to tradition. History writing in ancient Israel was (and is in most modern historiography) an affirmation and a protest.

It is characteristic, especially of Christian scholars, to assume that in the postexilic period, as reflected in Chronicles, the issues were mundane, unimaginative, and therefore unimportant. The literature seems to polemicize only about matters of orders, structure, and turf. But such traditioning is not to be dismissed lightly (even though we do the same in the New Testament with our disregard of the Pastoral Epistles and the early development of "Catholic" Christianity), for the controversies were about the shape of the community of faith, about the distribution and administration of power. And while other issues may be intellectually more stimulating, none is more crucial than the question of the shape of authority. This has been evident in Roman Catholic discussions of collegiality since Vatican II and in the current discussions of the Consultation on Church Union. It has become evident that "turf questions" are ones through which the crucial theological issues are settled, and it is also evident we are mostly novices in thinking theologically about structure and order. That the Chronicler used old traditions to prescribe orders and structure is an affirmation that the old traditions

have both power and importance for subsequent issues, no matter how unimportant or mundane.

The other major traditioning enterprise we will note in the post-Pentateuchal period is that of apocalyptic. In many ways it is to be understood as the antithesis of the Chronicler, who wishes to settle issues within the establishment[21]. By contrast, apocalyptic is bold, cosmic thinking, impatient with such confines because it believes they permit no viable theological affirmation. The establishment limits faith to a holding action and permits no new thing, but the heart of apocalyptic is the "new thing."

It seems clear that the most important study in this area has been that of Paul Hanson[22]. He has constructed the bold hypothesis that apocalyptic language, imagery, and literature appear when the burdens and dilemmas of history can no longer be handled or coped with in terms of historical possibility. And the burdens of the exile and after did become unbearable. With the emergence of apocalyptic (in the Old Testament this is clearest in Zech. 9-14 and Daniel), there is a progressive separation of holy vision and historical reality. And because historical reality is so burdened, the holy vision concerning the new age receives total attention.

For our purposes, however, it is important to note that even the apocalyptic tradition, which presents a nonhistorical view of reality, seriously engages traditional materials. The apocalyptic authors do not manufacture their bizarre imagery but appeal to very old traditions, reshaping them to bear a fresh message. The materials which they use sometimes include prophetic imagery, but more often the authors appeal to cosmic creation traditions that were partially neglected or at least subordinated in the prophetic period[23]. Because of the radical thrust of their message, the authors must utilize the most radical traditions, those of cosmic conflict and renewal. Here, as with each of the other traditionists, it would be illuminating to pay attention to the materials selected and the reasons why they were judged appropriate.

The Pentateuchal traditions had been shaped out of older ones, and the apocalyptic material, in part at least, out of them. And also like its Pentateuchal forebears, the apocalypse engaged in head-on fight with temptations from its cultural milieu. It issued the bold

affirmation that God's new age was about to break in. It emphatically denounced the suggestion that historical powers could manage their own fate, control the new age or resist the irresistiable power of God. Apocalyptic is above all things an *Auseinandersetzung*—a dispute—with the "lovers of this age" and a kerygma about the age to come. An evangelical hermeneutic delivers the study of this literature from much dull, uninstructive annotating, and focuses on the faith crisis and the kerygmatic response. The faith crisis, as Hanson has shown, comes from the unbearable burdens of the age and the hopeless strain of living with them. The kerygmatic response is an affirmation of the new age to come.

The traditioning process as suggested by Wolff's methodology is not limited to the Old Testament. The same process is at work in the gospel traditions of the New Testament. The core tradition of the gospel of Jesus must have been fixed very early. But the church, like Israel, was not content simply to keep repeating it. Rather, that tradition had continually to be reshaped to meet new situations and to engage in new questions and challenges from culture.

Thus the four Gospels may well be understood in terms of a traditioning process not unlike that of the Pentateuchal traditions[24]. Of course there are differences: a contracted time span, the separation of the Gospels as transmitted to us (the Pentateuchal sources are interwoven), and a much reduced function of oral transmission. But as in the Pentateuchal traditions, each New Testament strand is selective in what it reports, each begins where it seems appropriate, and each boldly reshapes tradition to meet a crisis between faith and cultural context. As in the Old Testament, materials in the New Testament were not shaped in a vacuum, for timeless preservation. They were shaped to speak a precise word of affirmation and protest, to a specific issue facing faith. Interpretation in the New Testament as in the Old depends on locating that interface of faith and culture. And it often happens, when the interface is located, that we discover we are involved in one not unlike it. That is a discovery or an expectation out of which a confessing church draws its strength and even its life.

C. Authority and Critical Exegesis

We have until now avoided the question of authority in our discussion. We have addressed ourselves largely to processes of traditioning and their literary, historical, and theological dimensions. But of course the question of the authority of Scripture is always central, and it is a particularly crucial one in the church today. In view of our fights over relevance and our sense of universal displacement, the issue of *who authors us* is urgent.

In the old contention, unhappily in some quarters not yet resolved, between "fundamentalists" and "modernists," the whole issue of documentary analysis has been presented as a controversy over authority. Those who had a "high" view of the Bible as Word of God viewed the documentary hypothesis as a rejection of the Bible's authority. And unhappily, critical scholars lacked either the graciousness and patience, or perhaps the wits, to make any cogent response to the charge, treating it instead with contempt. It is an issue which must be faced, for profound hermeneutical issues are at stake.

The charge that the documentary hypothesis calls into question the authority of the Bible[25] can be divided into two parts. First there is the purely formal claim of the later traditions that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. This is a concern and fear that often escapes critical scholars. The issue is even propounded as a Christological one, for Jesus himself refers to texts from the Pentateuch as the words of Moses; therefore, some say, to question Mosaic authorship calls into question Jesus' authority and his knowledge of all such matters. Against one who makes such connections, reasoned argument is not likely to prove useful. But it is important to make the point that questions of authorship in our modern sense could not have been important to Jesus or any first-century person. To refer to the Pentateuch as the "Books of Moses" can hardly be taken as a literary judgment about the origin of the books, but is rather a statement about the *theological authority* claimed by the books and attributed to them[26]. That is, the one who stood at the burning bush, who approved the ark and tabernacle, who stood face to face with God, is the one who authorizes our faith and our sacred books. Here "authorizes" is used not in the sense of literary creation but

rather in terms of granting legitimacy. That surely is the claim made in the New Testament, and one which critical scholars in no way affect by their work.

Thus to the claim of the old tradition, the primary response to be made concerns the distinction between literary authorship and theological legitimacy. One describes the way the material got shaped and the other describes the theological claim of the literature upon the life of a believing community. It helps no one to confuse the two questions. Clearly it is the latter which must be the theological concern of the church, a concern which the documentary approach in no way affects, whether to support or deny. The documentary approach is not interested in such an issue, and while we may speak of the literary efforts of JEDP, nobody has ever thought to appeal to such unnamed artists for theological authority. To do so would be to misunderstand the nature of the theological issue as well as the nature of the literary discussion.

Second, beyond the formal attribution to Moses, there is the more substantive concern that such analysis seems not to respect the integrity of the material but simply regards it as a series of hit-and-miss meetings with changing circumstances. And surely such a changing patchwork can hardly be a basis for the faith of a community, either Jewish or Christian.

Implicit in this concern is a presupposition about the "Word of God" and the character of holy history. There is a temptation to want to put the Bible beyond the reaches of history and especially beyond the whims and controversies of the community of faith. It is reassuring to think of God's word as once for all delivered, by a clear process to an identifiable person, for the future reference of the believing community. But even if we do not accept the documentary hypothesis, that is not what the Bible offers us. Rather, God's word, as reported in the tradition, comes always to unexpected persons, at unexpected times and places. The word of God is not orderly and "on call," but is free, and comes and goes as God wills. The classic example is the expectation that the new king would be born in Jerusalem, while in fact the incarnate word was born in overlooked and unworthy Bethlehem.

And so all through the Bible. To a desperate man outside his

tent with his wife laughing (Gen. 18:1-15). To a shepherd (Ex. 3) or a later one (Amos 7: 14-15). And the word spoken to them is never an eternal announcement. It is always a "tract for the times," addressed to a particular crisis and to bring newness into history. The word of God in all its entries of course is not disconnected, for there is a consistency to its thrust. But it is always new, fresh and powerful, always addressing an issue, always in history, for history, transforming history, always confronting person or community in a particular crisis. It has a vitality to it that leads the faithful to discern new insight, fresh affirmations, and unexpected demands.

The Pentateuch is not the word of God as a large undifferentiated literary mass. Rather it is the story of that word intruding in a variety of ways at particular points of crisis. It should be obvious that Wolff's methodology takes that intrusion most seriously. The word never addresses history in a vacuum; it always addresses a particular situation. Wolff's quest for the kerygmatic intent is precisely to discern that thrust of the word in each particular entry. Far from challenging the notion of the Bible as word of God, Wolff takes the Bible as precisely that. His entire exegetical approach is to hear the word in all its particularity and authority. But he resists every attempt to remove the word from its historical context and to place it in a vacuum where it need not be taken seriously. Thus the issue raised between authority and critical literary work is a false one. The issue is not whether critical work calls into question the authority of the Bible. The issue is a hermeneutical one having nothing to do with critical study. Rather the issue is what is meant by the word of God in the text, whether it is a live word addressed to a particular historical moment, or an eternal word without reference to history. The latter position is a denial of the historical character of the gospel, a position long ago rejected by the church. To use the issue to avoid questions which would make us take the word in history seriously, argues only an insecure faith.

It should be clear that the essays in this volume are focused on kerygma, i.e., on gospel proclamation. They seek to hear how and in what ways the church has been called to repent and to receive the lordship of Yahweh. What is at issue in the authority of Scripture is not a process of literary creation but an intrusion by the

holy God into human history, to call a community to his purposes and his promises. In that sense these essays affirm the authority of Scripture, the authority which finally speaks of word becoming flesh.

Of all the texts of the Bible, the Pentateuch seems most removed and for that matter most fixed. But these essays suggest that the Pentateuch is to be perceived not as a mass of texts but as a process, a process in which the relentless purposes of God erupt in new situations. The text makes new disclosures in new situations and causes new discernments of who may be trusted and who must be served. The vitality of the text is that it is indeed a live, dynamic partner in the dialogue with its believing, interpreting, transmitting partner, the Israel of God. The text as partner speaks not like a fortune cookie, fixed and predictable, but like a person, with an answer not expected, one which from time to time fills us with amazement. Remarkably, the vitality of the new disclosure in the old tradition is best discerned when his people find themselves in a strange land.

Addendum to the First Edition

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

by Walter Brueggemann

In making a decision to republish this collection of essays, the publisher and editor determined that the first edition should stand as it is. Obviously the main essays (those by Wolff) cannot be rewritten, because they are themselves a classic statement of one aspect of scholarship. And given their perspective and methodology, they stand up well midst the ongoing work of scholarship.

So we have concluded that we might better add a note about subsequent scholarly work. The purpose of this addendum is to enable students to follow the contours and participate in the ongoing concern of scholarly work, to observe how shifts in methodology and in the questions posed, lead to new arguments and occasionally new insights. We may comment on seven developments, of which the last two are the most important and the most interesting.

1. In the first edition of this book, the historical-archaeological synthesis established under the hegemony of William Foxwell Albright was cited. Since that time, there has been considerable erosion of that synthesis[1]. While those issues are somewhat removed from the literary-theological issues that concern us here, it is necessary, in studying these old traditions, to recognize that archaeological issues are now very much in flux.

Perhaps the most significant critique of that synthesis is the new uncertainty concerning the patriarchal[2] materials. Independently, but in parallel fashion, John van Seters[3] and Thomas L. Thompson[4] have offered major critiques of the conventional historical placement of the tradition. Van Seters' critique is the more radical, because he proposes that the traditions clustered around Abraham are in fact sixth-century creations and they provide no

sound historical data for the early period. Van Seters has yet to carry out his argument for the other ancestral materials.

The archaeological evidence related to later Pentateuchal materials, i.e., those from Moses forward, have not been treated so harshly. But it is correct to report that the certitude with which archaeological claims are directly linked to Biblical materials has been shaken in ways that apply to every historical question. The Moses-Joshua materials have been subjected to a careful review and evaluation by John J. Bimson[5]. And while one need not follow his arguments or conclusions, the fact that he can offer a proposal counter to the recent consensus indicates how unsure things are.

One of the happy results of recent work is the publication of H. Darrel Lance's handbook of archaeological method[6]. His presentation explores the limits as well as the possibilities for further archaeological work. On the whole, it is clear that a distance and uncertainty is recognized about the way in which archaeological work illuminates the text. Such illumination is generally an indirect matter.

2. Much more directly related to the essays at hand is recent work on the Pentateuchal literary traditions. And among these, perhaps the most important work and the most scholarly restlessness with the old consensus has been involved with the Yahwist tradition. Wolff's splendid article is based on von Rad's synthesis which placed J as a literary-theological effort reflecting the "Solomonic Enlightenment" of the tenth century. It is fair to say that that placement is still the working assumption of most scholars. But it is increasingly an insecure placement, questioned by scholars.

The most serious departure from von Rad's position has been offered by Rendtorff[7]. He proposes not simply a different dating for J, but a fundamental objection to the entire notion of literary sources. He urges that in his crucial paper of 1938[8], von Rad has in fact shifted the question away from literary sources to the theological structure of the Pentateuch (Hexateuch), even though von Rad himself may not have recognized this change.

In any case, Rendtorff is not in fact interested in the editorial process as concerns "sources," for he believes that the strands of

tradition cannot be traced through the Pentateuch. Rather he urges that there are "separate complexes of tradition," e.g., the Abraham-Isaac materials, the Jacob narrative, the Exodus cycle, each of which is an intentional theological statement of its own. Negatively it is impossible to trace layers of tradition across these distinct complexes. Positively it is then important to study the ways in which these clusters have been related to each other, especially when they have different theological intentions.

It is too early to assess the impact or importance of Rendtorff's proposal. It proposes such a massive and fundamental departure from the accepted categories of Old Testament scholarship that it will continue to be under discussion for a long time to come. While it has been welcomed by a small number of scholars who are intensely concerned with these questions, it appears that most scholars continue to operate with the conventional categories. But it is impossible to say whether this is simply the result of long established habit, or if Rendtorff has been seriously considered and found wanting. His writing is indeed the proposal of an alternative paradigm[9]. It remains to be seen if it will carry scholarship before it.

The synthesis associated with von Rad concerning J rests on a cultural assumption concerning the Solomonic period[10]. That is, it is assumed that J reflects a time of shifted epistemological categories derived from a changed cultural circumstance. And those shifted epistemological categories require a very different theological formulation. James Crenshaw[11] has criticized the hypothesis of a Solomonic Enlightenment and has cast doubt upon the adequacy of such an assumption about Israelite culture.

In the year before Rendtorff's book, H. H. Schmidt[12] published an independent study of the Yahwist. His conclusion is that J is to be dated to the seventh century, and therefore in the same world as that of the Deuteronomist. It is evident that from a very different direction, Schmidt has arrived at conclusions not unlike those of van Seters.

These several studies have created a different situation for the study of traditions. There surely is no new consensus, nor a model which claims any general scholarly assent. For now we may only say that the study of J is uncertain and confused. Two things are clear.

First, the issues concern not only the conclusions to be drawn, but the categories and methods of study as well. These more recent scholarly efforts, especially the proposal of Rendtorff, represent a sharp break with older methodologies. Second, it is clear that these new studies constitute a serious attack on the synthesis of the last two generations. It is not yet clear, however, if that attack will carry the day. Certainly many scholars continue to work on the presuppositions of von Rad's synthesis and Wolff's article[13]. That synthesis was perhaps not so preoccupied with scholarly niceties and precision but evidenced a theological sensitivity which is not apparent in more recent discussions.

3. The Elohist has not been regarded as such a formidable literary strand nor has it commanded great attention in recent scholarship. Perhaps it is therefore fitting that Wolff's article has not received as much attention as his work on J, nor has there been a great deal of subsequent scholarly activity[14]. There is general agreement among scholars, together with Wolff, that this tradition intends to combat religious syncretism. Jaros[15] has studied the material with this in mind, as is evident from the title of his book. There is no specific agreement about the dating of the book, though as Jaros makes clear, it likely is to be set somewhere between 922 (and the actions of Jeroboam) and the time of Hosea. Jaros himself is inclined to a date in the first half of the eighth century[16]. H. Klein[17], in a way not altogether convincing, dates the material about 800, and places it in the shrine of Bethel. Among the most important studies of E is the Harvard dissertation of Alan Jenks[18]. Against most scholars, he sets the tradition in the tenth century (about 922) and hinges his interpretation on a polemic against Jeroboam. In other matters however Jenks is in agreement with Wolff concerning affinities to Hosea and linkage with the prophetic-Levitic tradition.

4. The Priestly tradition in many ways continues to be an enigma. Perhaps the most important issue that has claimed scholarly attention is the date, because it is clear that much interpretation

derives from that judgment. In the article in this volume, I have presumed an exilic date. And from that date I have proposed a theological intentionality. It is obvious that a great deal hinges on that dating.

We may cite several studies which are concerned with theological intentionality which sees P as a theological response to the situation of the exile.

a) Ralph Klein[19] interprets P in terms of eschatological hope. It is his view (following Michael V. Fox) that P offers a series of "signs" which serve to remind both God and Israel in exile of the promise still to be kept and trusted in.
b) Joseph Blenkinsopp[20] has ingeniously considered the structure of P and has observed a striking pattern which links the beginning and end of the tradition around a mythic pattern that is concerned for *'eres* as both *creation of the world* and *distribution of the land.* He suggests, for example, that the P account of the flood be "read as a kind of parable of the inundation of Israel by the nations resulting in exile from the land (earth)."[21]
c) Eugene March, in a paper presented in 1976[22], has understood the Priestly tradition as a "Theology for Sojourners," concerned with the presence of God, the land and "the exilic problem of guilt."
d) Perhaps with the greatest suggestiveness for future work, Mary Douglas[23] has considered the social function of the "constructed world" of P in terms of dietary restrictions, distinctions between "clean and unclean," and preoccupation with the precisions of proper ritual procedure. She concludes that in the sixth and fifth centuries, Israel was in a battle for its existence. It articulated these rules to guard the boundary of the community and to draw a line against outsiders for the sake of the insiders.

Now it is clear that none of these discussions has dealt in a detailed way with the critical questions of date. Rather they have made certain critical assumptions which have permitted a theological reflection. Each of these is broadly consonant with the essay in this volume.

The major critical issue of dating continues to be raised out of the work of Y. Kaufmann.[24] Menahem Haran[25] has presented a forceful and careful argument placing the P tradition as early as the eighth century, deriving from the shrine in Shiloh and linking it precisely to the work of Hezekiah. The argument of Haran is a serious one and will need to be heeded by scholars. If the dating is shifted, then much of the argument indicated above concerning theological intentionality will need to be drastically revised.

Obviously the decision to place the P source before or after 587 is a crucial one. But it is worth observing that the distinction between Haran and the other scholars listed is more than one of critical placement. It is clear that Klein, Blenkinsopp, March and Fretheim have interpreted the text with a kind of theological imaginativeness and freedom in which Haran is not interested. It may of course be asked if that imaginativeness is valid or not. But as we review the critical issues, it is worth noting that there is regularly an accompanying question of "stenic/tensive" modes of interpretation. And in the long run that may be a more crucial issue[26].

5. The Deuteronomic History continues to be understood primarily according to Noth's dominant hypothesis. But such a focus still permits an enormous field of investigation. It may be correct to say that scholars continue to chip away at Noth's hypothesis in various ways, but none of these efforts seem to effect the main force of his argument. On p. 118, I noted that Frank Cross had offered a main alternative to Noth's dating in the exile by proposing two editions of the Deuteronomist. In making such a proposal, Cross was not doing a new thing, but reviving an older view. Since Cross' proposal was articulated, one has the impression that his argument has gained some ground among scholars. However, it appears that that gain has not come from new evidence, but from regular and frequent repetition of that evidence, which perhaps is increasingly found to be compelling[27]. As argued earlier, even if we settle for two editions of the Deuteronomist, this does not refute Wolff's suggestion concerning the completed form of the text or its apparent theological intentionality.

Noth's hypothesis has also been critiqued from the other side,

to suggest not only that the exilic statement has important antecedents, but that it also has subsequent literary developments to cope with new social situations and their faith issues. The impetus for such investigation appears to come from the work of Rudolph Smend[28], but has been worked out in greater detail in the work of Dietrich[29] and Veijola[30]. These latter studies have attempted to identify in the text theological tendencies which they believe reflect layers of literature and therefore different stages of editorial work. One can learn a great deal from those careful analyses. But I am doubtful of such a method, for it appears to be yet another return to the dissection of the text. Methodologically such a process requires that wherever there is a literary tension or incongruity, it is resolved (or better dissolved) by splitting the elements apart and assigning them to different sources or authors. And that in principle robs the literature of its sophistication and tension which permits communication which is subtle and not flat. While the work is done with great care, I do not believe it greatly advances our understanding of the text[31].

A third noteworthy move concerning the Deuteronomic literature is a programmatic proposal by Robert Polzin[32]. His book is a vigorous, sustained attempt to handle a major piece of Scripture according to the methodology and criteria of the new literary criticism. Polzin begins with the judgment that the older historical-critical work, including that of Noth, is not very helpful or valid, and not to be relied upon[33]. So he proposes to begin afresh, taking the text of Deuteronomic narrator as it is. His methodological point of engagement is derived from V. N. Voloshinov. It notes the tension and interaction between the "reported" speech of Moses and the "reporting" speech of the Deuteronomist. The conclusion to which Polzin is led is that the reporting speech carried on a continued polemic against the fixed and rigid teaching of Moses. Or as Polzin puts it[34], it is "critical traditionalism" protesting against "authoritarian dogmatism" in the "ideological dialogue" of the literature.

Polzin's study is a formidable and bold one which surely raises new questions for scholarship. Undoubtedly it will be heavily criticized and greatly resisted, because, like Rendtorff, his proposal is for an entirely fresh approach to the literature. His synchronic disregard of historical-redactional questions is completely opposed to

the methods of Smend, Dietrich and Veijola which we have noted. The issue turns not simply on Polzin's own work, but on the large methodological issues of synchronic and diachronic study, on the relative priority of literary or historical study. Polzin agrees that we must have both, but gives clear priority to the former.

At this early point, these observations seem appropriate:

a) It is important that thus far Polzin has handled only Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges. We do not yet know the outcome of his entire program, so we must await his treatment of Samuel and Kings.
b) He does indeed make a little go a long way. In much of the literature, the reporting speech is sparse and it takes inventiveness to make the point.
c) I wonder if perhaps Polzin (or if not Polzin, in any case his readers) do not rely on Noth's governing hypothesis more than is recognized. Even to speak of "Deuteronomistic" corpus depends on the older criticism. Perhaps the vitality of that older criticism needs to be explored more, even and especially in the context of this new approach.
d) I am reluctant that any single device (in this case, that of Voloshinov) should exercise such overriding influence. Of course Polzin should not be faulted about this particularly, but the methodological issue must be carefully assessed.
e) As I have indicated in my review of the book (forthcoming in *Interpretation*), I believe that Polzin's hermeneutical conclusion (favoring Gadamer over Hirsch) on the basis of his study is a precarious one. I appreciate his courage in being willing to risk such a linkage, but I am not convinced that it follows from the argument.

In any case, Polzin has raised the most radical questions concerning studies in the Deuteronomic corpus. And while he disassociates himself from Noth's critical work, there are hints that his end result is not so different from that of Wolff. Thus he writes:

> And certainly its admixture of destruction and hope is an obvious and essential feature, one that later studies such as von

> Rad's, Wolff's, and Cross's have been quick to point out. We shall see in the next chapter how the Deuteronomic theme of conditional hope is inextricably woven into the programmatic introduction to the Deuteronomic History, the Book of Deuteronomy[35].

The conclusion of "conditional hope" is of course the way in which Wolff has understood the material. With Polzin, as with such close studies generally, one may wonder if the enormous technical and methodological proposal does not yield results that are closely linked to conclusions already reached by other scholars in less laborious and elaborate ways.

6. The most important scholarly development for our purpose has been a growing reservation about the legitimacy of source distinction in any form. In very different ways, Rendtorff and Polzin have reservation about such an enterprise. And now we may add a most formidable voice in raising the same question. Brevard Childs has made a most important proposal which would work against the kind of analytical work reflected in the present essays[36]. Childs' own program is to study each book of the Old Testament in its canonical form and so to see the literature whole, without trying to sort out the earlier stages and processes. He indicates the affinities his work has with the "newer literary critical methods."[37] And so at points his concerns are not unlike those of Polzin. However at two important points he parts company. First, he is theologically attentive in a way that Polzin does not intend to be. He seeks to interpret "the biblical text in relation to a community of faith and practice for whom it served a particular theological role as possessing divine authority."[38] Such a concern obviously moves in directions very different from most of the so-called new literary critics. Whereas Polzin wants to take the text on its own terms, Childs wants to hear it in terms of the confessing community with which the text belongs. Second, in trying to take the text on its own terms, Childs would of course avoid pursuit of "deep structures," for the identity of "deep structures" almost always represents an imposition on the text more misleading than the imposition of "literary sources."

Childs quite explicitly critiques the method represented in these present essays:

> Then again, the canonical method which is being outlined differs sharply from the so-called "kerygmatic exegesis" which was popularized by von Rad and his students in the 50s and 60s. Classic examples of this method can be found in the writings of H. W. Wolff, C. Westermann, W. Brueggemann, among others. For several years beginning in 1966 *Interpretation* ran a series of articles under the rubric "*Kerygma* of the Bible". This method attempted to discover the central intention of a writer, usually by means of formulae or themes, which intention was then linked to a reconstruction of a historical situation which allegedly evoked that given response. Its major concern was to combine historical critical analysis with a type of theological interpretation. A major criticism of the method is the extremely subjective, reductionist method in which the form-critical method has been extended beyond its original function to derive a theological message. Often the assumption that the theological point must be related to an original intention within a reconstructed historical context runs directly in the face of the literature's explicit statement of its function within the final form of the biblical text[39].

Thus Childs believes that a study of the parts is a misuse of the text. That is not because there was no editor or redaction process. Rather the text as it stands is a confessional statement by a community which means to make a theological assertion in the text. And for that purpose all the earlier stages are not only irrelevant but misleading, for they detract from the character and intentionality of the canonical text as it is presented and valued. Childs thus makes an urging about scholarly method from his theological understanding[40].

But now we must have ongoing conversation about whether Childs' judgment about literary method is a proper extrapolation from his theological understanding. Can it also be urged, against Childs, that analytical literary investigation does not detract from but illuminates and enhances the canonical, theological statement? That, I suggest, is one long-standing intention of critical method to which many scholars continue to subscribe. It is surely correct for

Childs to say that critical work has often not served to illuminate and enhance the theological statement. But Childs is not writing about excesses or failures, but about such work *in principle*. The issue turns on whether such analytical, critical methods are on occasion the enemy of canonical, theological interpretation or if they are a detraction in principle. While Childs is unambiguous about this, the debate will continue. Clearly Wolff (as Childs well knows) intends his method to serve the full theological intention of the text.

And perhaps that raises a delicate question. Childs tends to write as though method as method is the issue. Could it be that the intention, possibility and risk of a *method* needs to be assessed only as it is handled by a *specific interpreter*? We do not have abstract methods, but only the use of method in the hands of specific, identifiable practitioners. To be sure, such an issue may be marked as too much *ad hominem*. But what seems clear in fact is that the very same method yields quite different results depending on the way it is used. That may seem an unscientific and undisciplined suggestion. But I am given pause with particular reference to Wolff. Indeed, Childs may say that Wolff's interpretations are superior to his methods[41].

Nonetheless, it is clear that the methodological issues are now basic and no longer concern simply more refinement. Rendtorff, Polzin and Childs in very different ways have questioned the entire effort of source analysis. And the essays of Wolff might usefully be restudied in terms of the relation between literary methods and theological intention. Clearly we are only at a beginning of a new agenda[42].

7. Finally a note should be added about the work of Norman Gottwald[43]. It is perhaps problematic to introduce Gottwald into this conversation, but I suggest his work is pertinent for the following reason. Polzin (and the new literary critics) and Childs (and canon critics) want to take the text as it stands on its own terms. And even though Childs (against Polzin) agrees about the cruciality of a community of faith and practice for whom the text served "a particular theological role as possessing divine authority," Childs still

wants to take the text as it stands, without question to the historical circumstance and that whole set of theological issues.

Against that entire perspective, Gottwald has become even more attentive to the political-theological intentionality of the community linked to the text. Specifically he has urged that the "narrative themes" in the Pentateuch are an ideological construct to serve the political enterprise of ancient Israel. Working from a perspective of critical sociology, Gottwald distinguishes between the "modalities of the cultic substructure," and the "narrative objectifications of the tradition superstructure."[44] The distinction between substructure and superstructure, obviously flies against Childs' urging. And while those categories may be derived from Marx, in the hands of Gottwald, they are related to von Rad's distinction between the Sinai traditions of theophany and law and the historical recital of Gilgal[45].

The claim of Gottwald is that the narrative themes are articulations (projections, inventions, extrapolations???) to give ideological support to a radical social experiment of liberated, egalitarian Israel. The tendency of Gottwald is to argue that the social experiment of the community comes first and out of that, comes the ideological rationale of the text[46]. Now it will be clear that Gottwald does not operate in a vacuum, even though he has made something of a fresh beginning. It is clear that it is still closely related to the credo hypothesis of von Rad[47]. And it is also evident that his sociological sensitivity is not without parallel to Wolff's work, especially on the prophets[48]. And for what it is worth, his notion of ideological rationale is not so different from van Seter's notion of a late confessional invention, though his different dating leads in a quite different direction[49]. What is clear is that Gottwald, more than any other scholar related to our concern, has knowingly used critical sociological tools in a fresh and suggestive way.

That usage, which I judge to be a significant gain, of course poses sharply the issue of how to understand issues between Childs and Gottwald. That may be the most important question now facing this area of scholarship. At first glance, it appears that they go in exactly opposite directions. And it is plausible that Childs would regard as illegitimate for his program much of Gottwald's work.

And yet, observe that Childs has written, that he seeks to interpret "the biblical text in relation to a community of faith and practice."[50] Gottwald seeks to pay attention to that community and the ways in which text and community are related to each other.

I suggest that Childs and Gottwald may need to be understood dialectically. Childs stresses the objective authority of the text, even over the community. That is how a canon functions. Gottwald, on the other hand, is concerned that the community is an active agent which creates the text with a specific intention at hand. They would tilt the dialectic very differently, but I cannot see how we can function without both accents[51].

It will be clear through all of this, that scholarship has moved rapidly and significantly beyond the work represented in these essays. And yet I suspect that the issues now before us are not so different from those Wolff has intended to raise. The essays themselves need no defense from this quarter. I suggest however, that read in the current methodological upheaval and confusion, it will strike one that Wolff, given his methodological commitments, has not permitted critical issues to impede his theological work, but has let his critical presuppositions serve his remarkable theological sensitivity in important ways. The methodological issues will continue to be before us. But theological work cannot wait until those are fully settled.

It is evident then, that the issues since the publication of Wolff's articles are in part *methodological*. That is, what are the *literary methods* that are appropriate to the material? We are witnessing an important shift from an *analytical* to a *synthetic* approach, or perhaps we may say from a *diachronic* to a *synchronic*. That move is reflected in the remarkable shift in the same series from the study of Habel[52] concerning "the old literary criticism" and that of Robertson[53] concerning "the new literary criticism." How strange it is that the same language is used to characterize both methods. There is no doubt where the momentum is now headed. And yet such a convinced "new literary critic" as Polzin[54] recognizes that the diachronic work is important and must also be heeded. It is not likely that we may choose between them. For the present generation, it may be adequate to bank on what has already been done by way of analysis

and dissection. But a new generation of students and scholars will have to reengage those close methods if we are to avoid a new reductionism.

But beyond the issues of literary method, we are pressed to *hermeneutical issues*. Those issues are much more difficult and complex. Clines and Childs have offered a key question for consideration. In what ways are these texts *literature* and in what ways are they *Scripture*? There is no doubt that there has been a need to recover the text *as literature*. But that does not mean that this literature is not also *Scripture*, by which one may mean the normative text of a confessing community of faith. The designation "Scripture" does not give warrant for dissection. But it does give warrant for asking about *message* or *kerygma*. And comfort may be taken that for all their strictures, Clines and Childs continue to raise that question, even if with another vocabulary. The category of "canon" which Childs has made so useful for the discussion, changes our study away from the kind of neutrality that some newer literary critics might prefer. "As Scripture," "as canon," mean the text is never treated only as literature, but always as a literature of a community seeking to be faithful. Indeed, Childs himself accepts such a task: "Yet the canonical approach differs from a strictly literary approach by interpreting the biblical text in relation to a community of faith and practice for whom it served a particular theological role as possessing divine authority."[55] And if it possesses such divine authority aimed at a concrete community, we may expect it to bear a proclamation[56] beyond a generalized aesthetic interest.

If with Sanders[57] one turns from the canonical *shape* to the canonical *process*, one may suggest that the dynamic of source analysis,[58] or its vitality (as we have termed it) is in fact a way in which the community practiced both stability and flexibility. Thus there is no fundamental conflict between a dynamic process of development and an enduring affirmation of canonical authority. My concern here is not to "defend" the approach Wolff has taken, but to insist that it not be lightly dismissed. For in its own context, this "kerygmatic" approach seeks to attend to the canonical claims of the text for a specific community of faith, claims which abide even as the text responds to new challenges.

What is in any case clear is that matters of *literary methodology* cannot be separated from matters of *theology and hermeneutics*. That linkage of course invites us to a new exploration. The suggestions of Clines and the proposal of Childs take up that invitation. But we have not yet reached even a provisional settlement of these difficult issues.

Notes

CHAPTER 1: Questions Addressed in Study of the Pentateuch

1. The most radical recent statement of this connection is made by Walter Wink, *The Bible in Human Transformation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 1–15.
2. Any viable understanding of Scripture as revelation—any understanding not merely mechanical—must focus on the creative, believing activity of the community of faith. Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), and a Catholic statement by John L. McKenzie, "The Social Character of Inspiration," *CBQ*, 24 (1962), pp. 115–124.
3. Paul Tournier has repeatedly clarified this issue by distinguishing between "technical medicine" and "personal medicine." He does not wish to choose between them, and the achievements of technical medicine are of course of great value. But the pendulum has swung so that now the issue is to recover the personal dimension. Cf. *The Healing of Persons* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); *The Whole Person in a Broken World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); and *A Doctor's Casebook* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960). In like manner the gains of analytic scholarship are of great value for understanding the Bible, but the pendulum has swung so that "personal exegesis" must now be recovered, the point Wink argues with great force.
4. J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957). Summary statements of the Wellhausen synthesis include Samuel Terrien, "History of the Interpretation of the Bible" in *The Interpreter's Bible,* ed. George Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), I, 127–141; A. Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development* (New York: Association Press, 1961), pp. 74–81. For developments after Wellhausen see C. North, "Pentateuchal Criticism" in *The Old Testament and Modern Study,* ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 48–83; and especially the critical essay by

John Bright, "Modern Study of Old Testament Literature" in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East,* ed. G. E. Wright (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 13–31.

5. While Wellhausen's major work is translated, Gunkel's programmatic *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1917) remains unavailable in English. Fortunately, the introduction to that commentary has been translated and is available as *The Legends of Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964). A major assessment of Gunkel's work has been made by Werner Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1969). See a summary description of his contribution in John H. Hayes, "The History of the Form-Critical Study of Prophecy," *Seminar Papers,* I, ed. G. MacRae (Society of Biblical Literature; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1973), pp. 60–70. Although focused on the prophets, Hayes' study broadly surveys Gunkel's total contribution.
6. Hans Joachim Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1956), p. 331. The statement is a quote from Gunkel, "Ziele und Methoden der Erklärung des Alten Testaments," *Reden und Aufsätze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1913), p. 14.
7. See James Muilenburg's programmatic statement, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL,* 88 (1969), pp. 1–18. Childs himself has not published a major study in the area, but his students are among the major proponents of form criticism in American scholarship. The important Abingdon Press form-critical process is largely peopled by the students of Childs. See the introductory essay by Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship Series; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971). Tucker is a student of Childs.
8. His basic statement is *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940, 1957); but the argument is also apparent in *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941, 1956) and *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (New York: Humanities Press, 1968).
9. John Bright, *op. cit.,* pp. 14–15, makes the same distinction that Albright makes in his criticism of Wellhausen: he accepts the hypothesis of documents but rejects the corollary inferred about the development of religion. This exceedingly important distinction is often overlooked.
10. William F. Albright, "Introduction" to *The Legends of Genesis,* by Hermann Gunkel, pp. vii–xii. Gunkel of course did not share

Wellhausen's view of the evolutionary development of Israel's religion, a point of major concern to Albright.

11. See the comprehensive review of von Rad's method and contribution by Douglas A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (Society of Biblical Literature; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1973), pp. 97–142.
12. Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970). See also his *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974).
13. Gene M. Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–38, has noted the difficulty of terms used to describe the various literary genres.
14. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (The Old Testament Library Series; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961, rev. ed. 1973), p. 35.
15. Cf. von Rad, *Genesis*, pp. 13–20; idem, "The Problem of the Hexateuch" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 3–13; and idem, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), I, 48–56.
16. The term is used in *Genesis*, p. 17. The German term is *Neukomposition*.
17. *Genesis*, p. 19. The German term is *schmieden*.
18. *Genesis*, p. 36. The German term for requisition is *Beschlagnahme*.
19. See Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 405. He speaks of the *"Aussagegehalt"* of the text.
20. On the contributions and methods of Martin Noth, see Knight, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–176; and Bernard Anderson, "Introduction: Martin Noth's Traditio-Historical Approach in the Context of Twentieth-Century Biblical Research" in Noth's *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), pp. xiii-xxxii.
21. B. Davie Napier, *From Faith to Faith* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955).

CHAPTER 2: WOLFF'S KERYGMATIC METHODOLOGY

1. His entire project is based on Wellhausen's documentary proposals. Indeed, no subsequent scholar we have mentioned has raised doubts about the general correctness of that hypothesis.
2. In a public statement in St. Louis, October 9, 1973, Hans Walter Wolff described the situation of the Confessing Church from his own experience and dwelled especially on the role of the Bible in that church. He indicated clearly that Scripture was the very

life-blood of that community, that much of its communal experience was in Bible study and that the study of Scripture was its most regular discipline. He especially stressed the hard demand to subject one's self to the text rather than to be its master. It is noteworthy that Wolff and his colleagues in that Confessing Church who stood squarely on Biblical faith became leaders of critical exegesis in Germany: this fact casts grave doubt on the idea that analysis is hostile to faith, as Wink and others have suggested. Wolff is a master of the critical method, yet he manifests a passionate Biblical faith.

3. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 405.
5. Kraus, *op. cit.*, p. 405, speaks of the process of *Durchleuchtung* by the credo. The text shows new meanings in every new situation. Such an understanding of the text is of course related to the "New Hermeneutic" of Fuchs and Ebeling, and also to the Roman Catholic idea of "Sensus Plenior," now largely rejected by scholars in the particular form in which it was expressed. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture* (Baltimore: St. Mary's University, Dissertation, 1955).
6. In addition to the various discussions of von Rad, cf. Peter Ellis, *The Yahwist: The Bible's First Theologian* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1968); Wolfgang Richter, "Urgeschichte und Hoftheologie," *BZ*, 10 (1966), pp. 96–105; L. Ruppert, "Der Jahwist-Künder der Heilsgeschichte" in *Wort und Botschaft*, ed. Josef Schreiner (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1967), pp. 88–107; Rolf Rendtorff, "Genesis 8:21 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten," *KuD*, 7 (1961), pp. 69ff.; Walter Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," *CBQ*, 30 (1968), pp. 156–181; and most recently, Odil Hannes Steck, "Genesis 12:1-3 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten" in *Problemen Biblischer Theologie*, ed. H. W. Wolff (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971), pp. 525–554.
7. See Wolff's statement, "The Hermeneutics of the Old Testament" in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), pp. 160–199.
8. The German term is *Aussagewille.*
9. The German term is *Verkündigungswille.*
10. The article is replete with use of the actual term "kerygma." The use of the term itself suggests quite a fresh hermeneutic.
11. See for example Alberto Soggin, "Deuteronomistische Geschichtsauslegung während des babylonischen Exils" in *Oikonomia*, ed. Felix Christ (Cullman Festschrift; Hamburg-Bergstedt: Herbert Reich Evangelischer Verlag, 1967), pp. 11–17; Walter Bruegge-

mann, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian," *Interpretation,* 22 (1968), pp. 387–402; Erich Zenger, "Die deuteronomistische Interpretation der Rehabilitierung Jojachins," *BZ,* 12 (1968), pp. 16–30; Lothar Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsveriens, 1969); G. Machholz, "Israel und das Land. Vorarbeiten zu einem Vergleich zwischen Priesterschrift und deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk" (Heidelberg: Dissertation, 1969); Jörg Debus, *Die Sünde Jerobeams* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967), especially pp. 93–115. Special reference should be made to an important article by Frank M. Cross, Jr., "The Structure of the Deuteronomic History," *Perspectives in Jewish Learning,* 3 (1964), pp. 9–24, now reprinted as "The Themes of the Book of Kings in the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History" in *Canaanite Myths and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 274–289. Cross' article calls into question the entire hypothesis of Noth upon which Wolff's study and most of the subsequent work has been based.

12. Hans Walter Wolff, *The Old Testament: A Guide to its Writings,* trans. Keith R. Crim (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 32–35.
13. The late dating of the law was a most important conclusion of the Wellhausian period; cf. Herbert Hahn, *Old Testament in Modern Research* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 4–10, but the connection between Priestly narrative and Priestly law was difficult to establish.
14. Claus Westermann, "Die Herrlichkeit Gottes in der Priesterschrift" in *Wort, Gebot, Glaube,* ed. Hans Joachim Stoebe (Eichrodt Festschrift; Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1970), pp. 227–249. Westermann seeks to study the Priestly tradition under the theme, "the glory of Yahweh." While he makes a strong case, it does not appear that he has overcome the problem of the difference between narrative and legal material. To be sure the term glory is found in some narratives relating to the wilderness, but only in one pericope noted by him in relation to the exodus (Ex. 14) and he notes no uses in relation to either the primordial or patriarchal history. Perhaps he makes a case to argue that the presence of Yahweh, for P, is of concern both to history and cult, but the evidence is not strong for that as an overriding theme in all the material normally assigned to P. It should be noted, nonetheless, that like Westermann, Wolff is inclined to understand P in terms of the "tent of meeting."

15. Karl Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," *ZTK,* 49 (1952), pp. 121–143. Other important studies of the Priestly tradition are documented in the present essay on that tradition. For the most recent analysis, see Frank M. Cross, Jr., "The Priestly Work," *op. cit.* (footnote 11 above), pp. 293–325, which supports the critical judgments made here. Of special interest is Cross' study of the blessing formula, which, he says, "is related to the promise of the land and to Israel multiplying in the land." (pp. 295–296).
16. This has been most fully explored by G. Machholz, *op. cit.* (footnote 11 above).
17. See the splendid discussion on this methodology with reference to Gen. 32:22-32, a parallel to 28:10-22, in Tucker, *op. cit.,* pp. 41–54. Tucker not only takes up the form of the original, but traces its transformation so that it becomes a text about the meaning and faith of Israel. Tucker's example shows clearly how the various methods are interrelated and interdependent. Note especially his reference to the statement: "no stage in this work's long period of growth is really obsolete; something of each phase has been conserved and passed on as enduring until the Hexateuch attained its final form" from von Rad, *Genesis,* p. 27. On the larger question of the Jacob story's use in the various traditions, see Terence Fretheim, "The Jacob Traditions," *Interpretation,* 26 (1972), pp. 419–436. See also F. R. McCurley, Jr., *Proclaiming the Promise* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974).

CHAPTER 3: THE KERYGMA OF THE YAHWIST

1. Originally printed in *Evangelische Theologie,* 24 (February 1964), pp. 73–97, and later included in Professor Wolff's *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964), pp. 345–373. Reprinted here from *Interpretation,* 20 (1966), pp. 131–158, and used by permission of *Interpretation* and Chr. Kaiser Verlag. Minor changes in wording have been made for the John Knox Press edition.
2. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, "Weissagung und Erfüllung" in *Glauben und Verstehen* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1952), II, 162ff.; H. Braun, "Das Alte Testament im Neuen Testament," *ZTK,* 59 (1962), pp. 16–31.
3. Cf. the inquiry by Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960), II, 349.
4. John 5:39; cf. R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1952), p. 201.

5. Rom. 3:21; whether beyond this, in 3:31, with Ulrich Wilkens ("Die Rechtfertigung Abrahams nach Rom. 4": *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferung* [1961], p. 120), *nomos* is meant as *graphē* is a question we will leave open; for a different view, see Gustav Klein, "Römer 4 und die Idee der Heilsgeschichte," *EvTh*, 23 (1963), pp. 443f. John 5:39 and Rom. 3:21 call the function of the Old Testament *martyreīn*.
6. Heb. 11; Rom. 4.
7. Cf. G. von Rad, "Offene Fragen im Umkreis einer Theologie des Alten Testaments," *TLZ*, 88 (1963), col. 444.
8. Cf. James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961).
9. Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948), p. 256; English translation: *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971).
10. E.g., Rudolf Smend, *Die Erzählung des Hexateuch auf ihre Quellen untersucht* (Berlin, 1912); and "JE in den geschichtlichen Büchern des AT," *ZAW*, 39 (1921), pp. 181–217.
11. Gustav Hölscher, *Geschichtsschreibung in Israel* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1952), pp. 20–32.
12. In addition, primarily M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1943), I, 3ff.
13. Cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, pp. 5f.; idem, *Das Buch Josua* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953), pp. 8ff.
14. G. von Rad, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958), p. 58.
15. Cf., in addition, recently Rudolf Smend, *Jahwekrieg und Stämmebund* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1963), p. 83.
16. See below, p. 49.
17. So M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, p. 35.
18. Cf. M. Noth, *loc. cit.*, footnote 127; further, B. L. Goff, "The Lost Yahwistic Account of the Conquest of Canaan," *JBL*, 53 (1934), pp. 241–249. Neither as to the conclusion nor the extent of the Sinai narrative can we arrive at any certainty, since we do not know what was sacrificed to editing.
19. Cf., recently, Otto Eissfeldt, "Jahwe, der Gott der Väter," *TLZ*, 88 (1963), pp. 481–490.
20 G. Hölscher, *loc. cit.*, p. 112, designates the "idea of the unity of the twelve tribes" as the "leading idea which shaped the historical picture of J," and sees its embodiment in the kingdom of David and Solomon, even though he has to move its composition into the post-Solomonic era because of his hypothesis that J is to be

found as far as 1 Kings 12:19. Hartmut Schmökel, "Zur Datierung der Pentateuchquelle J," *ZAW*, 62 (1950), pp. 319–321, has concluded from Ex. 14:13 that J must have been written before the events of 1 Kings 14:25 and thus before the fourth year of Rehoboam, in which Jerusalem and the temple were plundered by the Pharaoh Shishak I.

21. Cf. 2 Sam. 24:5-7 and 1 Kings 4:7-19; M. Noth, *Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1950), pp. 176ff. Deserving particular attention is how studiously and laboriously J brings the Jacob-Esau narratives about shepherd and hunter, which were circulated among the East-Jordanian Ephraimites, to the ears of his contemporaries by means of etymologies of names in Gen. 25:25, 30 (cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, p. 107). This would force them to think of the suppressed Edomites (2 Sam. 8:13-14). Cf. V. Maag, "Jakob-Esau-Edom," *ThZ*, 13 (1957), pp. 418–429; also, Leonhard Rost, "Zum geschichtlichen Ort der Pentateuchquellen," *ZTK*, 53 (1956), p. 5.
22. Cf. 1 Kings 5:9-14; Ch. 10.
23. G. von Rad, *Gesammelte Studien*, p. 76; cf. M. Noth, "Die Bewährung von Salomos 'göttlicher Weisheit'," *VT Suppl*, 3 (1955), pp. 225–237. Genesis 27:40*b* looks like a postscript to 39*b*-40 (*whyh!*). One can ask whether J supplements the traditional saying here or whether it is a case of addendum on the basis of 2 Kings 8:20-22, coming from the era around 850.
24. Cf. G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1955), p. 243; Otto Eissfeldt, *Die Genesis der Genesis* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), p. 27; M. Noth, *Geschichte Israels*, pp. 188f.
25. Cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, p. 217.
26. Cf. G. von Rad, *Gesammelte Studien*, pp. 71 ff.
27. Cf. G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose*, p. 136; and M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, pp. 256 ff. Genesis 18:19 offers a later appended explanation; that it is later, and secondary, is suggested by the Deuteronomic styling of the material.
28. See below, p. 53, and Rolf Rendtorff, "Genesis 8:21 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten," *KuD*, 7 (1961), p. 69.
29. After an imperative, a consecutive clause in the first person is formed with a cohortative (Gen. 27:4; 1 Sam. 28:22); a consecutive clause in the second person, after a cohortative, is formed with the indirect imperative (1 Kings 1:12; 2 Kings 5:10); cf. Paul Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hébreu Biblique* (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1947), § 116 b.f.h.; and Georg Beer and D. R. Meyer, *Hebräische Grammatik* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1955), § 117 (1). Such consecutive clauses may have the sense of a result as well

as the sense of an intention. The suggestion that 2*b* be read *wᵉhāyāh* and be translated "that he shall become a word of blessing" (Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1917], p. 164) has support neither in textual transmission nor in the context; cf. recently Josef Schreiner, "Segen für die Völker in der Verheissung an die Väter," *BZ NF,* 6 (1962), pp. 4f. Verse 3*b* and its explanation by J himself (see below, p. 55) exclude this from the outset; cf. H. Junker, "Segen als heilsgeschichtliches Motivwort im AT," *Sacra Pagina,* I = *Bibl. Eph. Th. L.* (1959), pp. 548–558.

30. Cf. C. H. Ratschow, "Werden und Wirken," *ZAW Beih,* 70 (1941), pp. 54 ff.
31. For the consecutive perfect as a consecutive clause after imperfect clauses, cf. Joüon, § 119 c.i.j. and Gen. 31:44; Amos 1:2; Joel 4:18*b*.
32. *Brk* in the Niphal is found *only* in the Yahwist in Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 28:14. For the purely passive meaning, besides the Qal passive participle, the Pual occurs 13 times in the Old Testament. Since the Niphal is similar to the Greek middle voice, and since the Yahwist will not exclude a peculiar attitude of the nations to Abraham, according to 3*b* as well as to 3*a*, one can succeed in hitting upon the sense of the Niphal by translating with Schreiner, *loc. cit.*, p. 7, "acquire a blessing (for) himself, procure himself a blessing." Something similar will be true also for the use of the Hithpael in Gen. 22:18; 26:4; Jer. 4:2, since the context does not indicate any variant in meaning from the Gen. 12:3 paragraph.
33. For the confirming perfect, cf. Carl Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1956), §§ 41f.
34. See above, footnote 29; also *KBL,* 22, col. 246*a*.
35. As *lectio foecundior,* the singular deserves unqualified preference over the plural, which in the LXX and other witnesses is intelligible as an assimilation to 3*a*.
36. Cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch,* p. 59; *Geschichte Israels,* pp. 115f.
37. Cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch,* p. 59; G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose,* pp. 14f. *Ntn* is the catchword of the promise and gift of the land in Deut. 6:23; 26:9; Josh. 24:13, and frequently.
38. For this reason one must not be surprised if the conquest theme at the end of the Yahwist's work does not appear in its proper significance and expected breadth; see above, p. 43. For as surely as the Yahwist knows about it and passes it on in his loyalty to

the tradition, it is just as certain that it does not belong to the realm of his particular interest.

39. Cf. Albrecht Alt, "Der Gott der Väter" in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 1959), I, 66.
40. Cf. recently Horst Seebass, "Zu Genesis 15," *WuD NF*, 7 (1963), pp. 132–149 (esp. p. 144), in discussion with Otto Kaiser, "Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Genesis 15," *ZAW*, 70 (1958), pp. 107–126, and with reference to A. Alt, *loc. cit.*, pp. 66f., and Kurt Galling, "Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels," *ZAW* Beih, 48 (1928), pp. 44–46.
41. F. Horst, "Gottes Recht," *ThB*, 12 (1961), p. 293.
42. F. Horst, *loc. cit.*, pp. 194 ff.
43. Just as in Gen. 27:29*a*.
44. G. von Rad, *Das erste Buch Mose*, p. 133.
45. For the difference in meaning, cf. Josef Scharbert, " 'Fluch' und 'Segen' im AT," *Biblica*, 39 (1958), pp. 1–26. One ought also to consider that *'rr* never has God as its object; Ex. 22:28 is particularly significant at this point (Scharbert, *loc. cit.*, p. 7; cf. p. 16). With the change from *'rr* to the Piel of *qll*, is the Yahwist thinking about the fact that the God of Israel is encountered in Israel and that it is precisely (only) those who despise Israel who will be afflicted with the curse of God? This interpretation fits well with Rendtorff's conclusion ("Genesis 8:21 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten," *KuD*, 7 [1961], pp. 69–78) that the Piel of *qll* means primarily "to designate [p. 72] (and treat) someone as cursed by God"; cf., above all, 2 Sam. 16:7 ff.
46. See above, footnote 35.
47. G. von Rad has consistently presented this in the clearest fashion; cf. *Gesammelte Studien*, p. 72.
48. Cf. H. W. Wolff, "Weltgeschichte—Heilsgeschichte im AT," *Der evangelische Erzieher*, 14 (1962), pp. 129–136.
49. R. Rendtorff, *loc. cit.*, p. 74, wants to apply the consolation which Noah brings, in 5:29, to the withdrawal of the curse in 8:21. The difficulty remains, because in 8:21 Noah is not the subject, as in 5:29. It would be better to consider the material in 9:20. As the inventor of viniculture, Noah makes life easier in the midst of toil. Thereby the Yahwist clarifies the suspension of the curse in 8:21f., which as such, however, is not yet a blessing.
50. Cf. Rendtorff, *loc. cit.*, pp. 72ff. It is noteworthy that *'rr*, besides in 12:3, occurs only one time in the patriarchal history (in 27:29); on the other hand, *brk* occurs more than thirty times in J.

51. Rudolf Bohren, *Predigt und Gemeinde* (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1963), pp. 134f.; English translation: *Preaching and Community,* trans. David E. Green (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965): "Inconceivable, that God appoints for himself a 'pastor.' Strange, that he is still 'in need of ministry,' that he sets men as watchmen."
52. Particularly in view of Gen. 26, one must not say with M. Noth (*Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch,* p. 256, note 622) that after Gen. 12:1-3, J "scarcely ever returned to these remarks which were placed once for all at the beginning."
53. As the Philistines move into relation to Isaac because of his immense "greatness" (see above, p. 57), so the Egyptian court, correspondingly, is uneasy about the "numerous and great" people—the growing number and might of the Israelites (Ex. 1:9).
54. See below, p. 64, on Is. 19:23-25.
55. Cf. M. Noth, *Das zweite Buch Mose: Exodus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1959), p. 214.
56. On the connection of the Sinai tradition to the tradition as a whole, cf. R. Smend, *Jahwekrieg und Stämmebund,* pp. 83 ff.
57. Cf. M. Noth, *Das zweite Buch,* pp. 216f.
58. See above, p. 43.
59. Cf. M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch,* p. 83: "The connection with the sanctuary of Baal Peor is, as well as the name, common to all branches of the Balaam narrative, and is therefore to be reckoned as among the oldest stock of the tradition."
60. G. von Rad, "Offene Frage," col. 405. In Gen. 19:29, P seems to have regarded even Lot's rescue as an answer to Abraham's petition and, to that extent, fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham.
61. Cf. Marie-Louise Henry, *Jahwist und Priesterschrift* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1960), particularly pp. 15 ff.: "The Yahwist's view of history . . . banishes hubris in the age of the foundation of the kingdom."
62. To speak of a "kerygma" for the entire work is justified, in that: the work brings (1) a message from God, which (2) has the character of a claim, that (3) is aimed at a specific hour in history (as the exegesis of Gen. 12:3*b*, in the framework of the great literary structure, has shown in particular). The message appears directly or indirectly in all the essential areas of the work. It is important to recognize that the Yahwist's conception is determined by a word of promise which he believes and which, in turn, remains plausible for his hearers.

    To be sure, it must be emphasized at the same time that this word of promise is clearly supported by historical traditions in

which Israel celebrates the fulfillment of ancient divine promises. This accords with the fact that the Yahwist primarily offers only the ancient *Heilsgeschichte*. He does not mean to remove the original point of these materials and as a rule allows them to express their own intent, an intent which very often evinces different levels of development (cf. G. von Rad, "Offene Frage," cols. 411–412). However, he quite frequently intrudes his own point of view. Thus, in the light of his key phrase in Gen. 12:3*b*, the ancient narratives become sketches in which the readers must recognize themselves and their task as those standing under the promise of Yahweh. Even the historical traditions express the message by which the Yahwist means to lead Israel into the future.

63. G. von Rad, "Offene Frage," col. 405.
64. Cf. J. Schreiner, *loc. cit.*, p. 13; Hans Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen* (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1960), p. 353.
65. See above, p. 57. Is. 44:1-5 has to be taken into account, too.
66. Cf. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments,* II, 400; H. W. Wolff, "Das Alte Testament und das Problem der existentiellen Interpretation," *EvTh,* 23 (1963), pp. 9 ff. = *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament,* pp. 325 ff.; further, Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961), I, 617 ff.

CHAPTER 4: THE ELOHISTIC FRAGMENTS IN THE PENTATEUCH

1. The present chapter is a translation of "Zur Thematik der elohistischen Fragmente im Pentateuch," *EvTh,* 29 (February 1969), pp. 59–72. It was delivered as an inaugural address at the University of Heidelberg on May 24, 1968, and is reprinted here as translated in *Interpretation,* 26 (1972), pp. 158–173, and is used by permission of *Interpretation* and Chr. Kaiser Verlag. Minor changes in wording have been made for the John Knox Press edition.
2. The view of Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948); English translation: *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971). Rolf Rendtorff finds room for disagreement with the thesis "that P is identical with the final editing of the Pentateuch," in "Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte," *EvTh,* 27 (1967), pp. 138–153; see esp. p. 147.

3. Gerhard von Rad, "Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch" in *Gesammelte Studien zum Altem Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958), pp. 58–75.
4. This is the view to which the studies of Paul Volz and Wilhelm Rudolph lead. See "Der Elohist als Erzähler—ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?" *ZAW Beih,* 68 (1938), and "Der 'Elohist' von Exodus bis Josua" (1938) by Rudolph; see also Claus Westermann, "Forschung am Alten Testament" in *Gesammelte Studien* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964), pp. 10f.
5. Otto Eissfeldt posits a "Lay source (L)" in addition to the Yahwist (J) and the Elohist (E) in *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), par. 27; English translation: *The Old Testament: An Introduction,* trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966). Georg Fohrer posits a "nomadic source (N)" in addition to J and E. See Ernst Sellin and Georg Fohrer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1965), par. 23; English translation: *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, rev. ed. 1968).
6. In connection with this and the following section, see Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte,* par. 5.
7. There can be considerable disagreement about the extent of the material omitted. Cf. Noth, *ibid.,* pp. 36 ff., and Fohrer, *Einleitung,* p. 169. Julius Wellhausen wrote, "JE is mainly a composite of materials from these two parallel historical accounts. J formed the basis; those materials were taken from E which were either in a different form from J or were not found there at all." *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963 reprint of original—Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1885), p. 22.
8. See below, pp. 77–78.
9. Cf. the various introductions to the Old Testament, most recently Fohrer, *op. cit.,* pp. 170f., and Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1917), pp. lxxxvi ff.
10. Volz regarded E as a new version of J; cf. Rudolf, "Der Elohist als Erzähler," *ZAW Beih,* 68 (1938), p. 22.
11. See von Rad's exegesis of this passage in his commentary on *Genesis,* trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 232 ff., from *Das erste Buch Mose: Genesis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956), pp. 203 ff.
12. See H. Graf Reventlow, *Opfere deinen Sohn: eine Auslegung von Genesis 22* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1968), pp. 44f., 49, 71.

13. On the double meaning of testing see von Rad, *Genesis,* pp. 234, 238, 239.
14. This is what E says instead of "Pharaoh," as in J.
15. On this passage, see Georg Beer, *Exodus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1939), III, and Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary,* trans. J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), from *Das zweite Buch Mose: Exodus.*
16. Instead of "and it saw," we should read with the Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, and Vulg., *wayir'û.* The plural agrees better with what follows.
17. Martin Buber translated literally, "that his fear may be over your faces." Noth translated "so that fear of him may stand before your eyes," *Exodus.* But the context is concerned with the power of the occurrence. For *hayah* as "have effect on" cf. Gen. 9:2 (P) and 42:36 (E).
18. In addition to Ex. 20:20, *ḥatah* appears as a contrast to fear of God in Elohistic passages in Gen. 20:9; 42:22. Cf. 41:9.
19. See chapter 3, ante.
20. The search for Elohistic fragments in Gen. 15:1-5 should not ignore what is said in Gen. 20:13. Therefore I think what Kurt Galling set forth in "Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels," *ZAW Beih,* 48 (1928), pp. 44f., and which von Rad took up again in his *Genesis,* p. 177, is worthy of new consideration. Noth has another view, *Überlieferungsgeschichte,* pp. 29 ff. (English translation, pp. 28 ff.). Cf. Horst Seebass, "Zu Genesis 15," *WuD NF,* 7 (1963), pp. 132–149, and Norbert Nohfink, *Die Landverheissung als Eid* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967), pp. 35–44.
21. See above, p. 77 on Gen. 20:13; 42:21 and 50:16.
22. See most recently, Rudolf Kilian, "Der heilsgeschichtliche Aspekt in der elohistischen Geschichtstradition" in *Theologie und Glaube* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1968), pp. 369–384.
23. See Odil Hannes Steck, *Überlieferung und Zeitgeschichte in den Elia-Erzählungen* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968). Items are found in Steck's index under "Elohist."
24. Cf. Wolff on 1:2 and 12:2 in *Hosea* (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1961).
25. See Siegfried Plath, *Furcht Gottes: der Begriff YR' im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1963), and Jürgen Becker, *Gottesfurcht im Alten Testament* (Rome: Päpstliches Bibelinstitut, 1965).

CHAPTER 5: The Kerygma of the Deuteronomic Historical Work

1. *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,* 73 (1961), pp. 171–186. Reprinted in Hans Walter Wolff, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964). This article was first presented as a guest lecture to the theological faculty of the University of Göttingen on July 15, 1960. It is translated and included here by permission of *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* and Chr. Kaiser Verlag.
2. Cf. H. W. Wolff, "Das Geschichtsverständnis der alttestamentlichen Prophetie," *EvTh,* 20 (1960), pp. 218–235.
3. Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschictliche Studien I, Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1943, 2d ed., 1957).
4. Alfred Jepsen, *Die Quellen des Königsbuches* (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953, 2d ed., 1956). The manuscript of the book was already completed in 1939, i.e., before the appearance of Noth's studies (p. 116).
5. Translator's note: Wolff's abbreviation is DtrG (for "deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk").
6. *Op. cit.,* p. 109.
7. *Op. cit.,* p. 108.
8. Thus Josh. 23:16; similarly Deut. 4:25–28; 1 Sam. 12:14-15, 25; 1 Kings 9:8-9; 2 Kings 17:23; 21:14-15.
9. Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 2d ed. 1958), I, 340. English Translation by D.M. G. Stalker, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), I, 343.
10. *Op. cit.,* p. 341.
11. *Op. cit.,* p. 342.
12. *Op. cit.,* p. 108.
13. *Op. cit.,* p. 11.
14. Thus Enno Janssen, *Juda in der Exilszeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956), p. 76.
15. 1 Kings 2:3-4; 9:5-7.
16. Deut. 17:18f.
17. 2 Kings 18:6; 21:8f.; 23:25.
18. 2 Kings 17:15-18; 21:2-15; 23:26.
19. With regard to this text see 3d ed. of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart: Bibelanstalt, 1949); restored with reference to 3:9, 15 and elsewhere.
20. 1 Sam. 12:10-13; cf. Judg. 8:23; 1 Sam. 8:7.

21. 1 Sam. 8:10ff.
22. 2 Kings 21:12-13; 23:27. "Israel," "Judah," "Jerusalem" here signify national entities and the monarchy. Otherwise it would be incomprehensible why a king like Manasseh is not mentioned explicitly.
23. *Op. cit.*, p. 108.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 108.
25. *Op. cit.*, p. 16.
26. Translator's note: I have used *thou, thee,* and *thy* in the explications whenever the Hebrew (and Wolff's German) indicates second person *singular*; the distinction from the plural is often significant.
27. At this point one needs to take account of Jepsen's observations establishing a clear relationship between the Jeremiah traditions and his R II (equated with DtrH *op. cit.*, pp. 100f.) for the books of Kings as well. Jepsen must count, for the books of Kings, too, on at least two deuteronomic hands. His assignment of 1 Kings 8:27-39 (except for 29*aβ*, 30, 36*aβ*) to a "priestly" redaction and of 1 Kings 8:44-53 to a "nebiistic" redaction is noteworthy for our question. It is clear that both know the theme of a "return"; cf. pp. 15ff. and 80ff., also the summarizing sections in Jepsen, p. 76 and p. 94. From this starting point the coalescence of Deuteronomy and DtrH in Deuteronomy 28–30 should be examined anew!
28. Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1954), p. 8, like Jepsen, presupposes a "group of theologians."
29. *Op. cit.*, pp. 38f.
30. Compare M. Noth, *op. cit.*, pp. 104f.
31. Compare Hosea 2:9; 3:5; 5:15; Jer. 3:1,22–4:2; on this see H. W. Wolff, *Hosea* (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1961), pp. 43, 79f., and H. W. Wolff, "Das Thema 'Umkehr' in der alttestamentlichen Prophetie," *ZTK*, 48 (1951), pp. 138ff.
32. Cf. Wolff, *Hosea,* p. 79.
33. G. von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 114; Engl. translation, p. 108.
34. Jer. 28:4. Cf. M. Noth, "Die Katastrophe von Jerusalem im Jahre 587 v. Chr. und ihre Bedeutung für Israel" *RHPhR* (1953), pp. 82–102 = *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament, II,* 346–371; English translation by D. R. Ap-Thomas, "The Jerusalem Catastrophe of 587 B.C. and its Significance for Israel" in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 267.
35. E. Janssen, *op. cit.*, p. 74, has characterized the word *return* as a hermeneutic rule of the deuteronomic school. Janssen shows on

the basis of the passage in Judg. 10:6-16 that DtrH holds out hope for Israel only by way of a return.

CHAPTER 6: The Kerygma of the Priestly Writers

1. Reprinted from *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft,* 84 (1972), pp. 397–413, and used by permission of *ZAW* and the author.
2. For J: "By you shall all the families of the earth bless themselves," for E: "Fear of God," and for DtrH: "return."
3. For J: the problem of treating other peoples responsibly in the time of the success of the united monarchy; for E: the problem of syncretism is the ninth and eighth centuries when the northern monarchy was closely related to the Phoenicians; and for DtrH: the problem of guilt and renewal in the exile after the debacle of 587.
4. Recent Pentateuchal criticism has been more cautious and tends to prefer "tradition" to "document." But in the case of P, a written source is plausible just as long as it is understood that the final creation utilizes older tradition materials. Cf. J. Bright, "Modern Study of Old Testament Literature" in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East,* ed. G. E. Wright (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 14–25.
5. These are set forth in the standard Old Testament introductions; e.g., Otto Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), p. 243; Ernst Sellin and Georg Fohrer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1965), pp. 194–202. But Eissfeldt, for example, inclines both to a later date and to extending the P materials farther than is assumed in this discussion. Bernard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 2d ed. 1966), pp. 380–393, has presented P's scheme in a graphic way.
6. Here I assume an exilic date. However, it may be somewhat later. This would not affect the present argument in any important way.
7. Among the more important studies of the materials are the extensive analyses of Gerhard von Rad, *Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), and his more recent discussion in *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), I, 232 ff.; Rolf Rendtorff, *Die Gesetze in der Priesterschrift* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1954); Klaus Koch, *Die Priesterschrift von Exodus 25 bis Leviticus 16*

(Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1959); and Peter Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 84–102. Of particular interest are the briefer studies of Kuschke and Koch. Kuschke, "Die Lagevorstellung der priesterschriftlichen Erzählung," *ZAW*, 63 (1951), pp. 74–105, seeks to interpret the presence of Yahweh in the community and cultic provision for his presence. Koch, "Die Eigenart der priesterschriftlichen Sinaigesetzgebung," *ZTK*, 55 (1958), pp. 36–51, seeks to understand the theology of the legislative materials around the foci of holiness, reconciliation, and meeting. See also the very suggestive thesis of G. Machholz, "Israel und das Land. Vorarbeiten zu einem Vergleich zwischen Priesterschrift und deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk" (Heidelberg: Dissertation, 1969).

8. Bruno Baentsch, *Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1900) has done the most elaborate dissection of strata.
9. Claus Westermann, *Genesis Accounts of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 93–95, notes the theological function of the genealogies. They are (a) to establish continuity between creation and history; and (b) to assert that these particular narratives affect the whole of human history. When the P narrative is presented as a playing out of the promise of Gen. 1:28 then obviously the link between creation and history is essential. See also the detailed analysis by M. D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 14–39.
10. The problem has been explored by Sigmund Mowinckel in a book by the same name, *Tetrateuch-Pentateuch-Hexateuch* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1964). The critical question has arisen largely because of von Rad's hypothesis on the Hexateuch, "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966), pp. 1–78, and Martin Noth's equally important proposal on Deuteronomic history, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957), I, 3–100. As a result the assignment of the material to sources is particularly difficult in terms of the conquest materials because the same materials will not easily serve both hypotheses.
11. See the careful and balanced judgment of John Bright, "The Book of Joshua, Introduction and Exegesis" in *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952), II, 542–546.
12. This is also the judgment of Elliger, "Sinn und Ursprung der priesterlichen Geschichtserzählung," *ZTK*, 49 (1952), pp. 121 ff.

Elliger concludes that beyond Numbers, P includes only Deuteronomy 34: 1*a*, 7–9, i.e., the report of Moses' death and the passing of the leadership to Joshua. And even in the latter part of Numbers, Elliger credits to P only portions of Num. 20, 21, 22, and 27. He of course regards other materials there as secondarily P. (See the slightly different delineation by Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch* [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1948], pp. 17–19.) While I am not inclined to be that radical, in this judgment as in many others, I agree with the careful statement of Elliger. And while my basic proposal was formed independently of Elliger, it is much strengthened by his work.

13. To my knowledge only Elliger has tried to focus on the narratives. Though Kushcke used the term "Erzählung" in his title, that clearly is not his interest. I do not maintain that a focus on the narratives is more legitimate or desirable or perhaps productive than a focus on the legal materials, but simply that it will yield different results.
14. The formula appears already in vs. 22 in partial form, but as we shall see, the addition of the two final verbs in the full five-verb formula of vs. 28, and lacking in vs. 22, is of great importance for understanding the message of P.
15. As is well known, the revelatory scheme of P has the deity withhold his name, Yahweh, until its disclosure to Moses. Both the name 'Elohim and the name peculiar to P, 'El Shaddai, are less germane to salvation history but more impressive in terms of universal scope. In P's historical context, the announcement of universality contained in God's name was vastly important—especially in the face of the attractive Babylonian alternatives.
16. G. von Rad, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 57, describes it as a "commission."
17. Note especially the close parallel in Is. 54:1-3, which is also a close chronological parallel to P. In mood that text is also parallel to the celebratory tone of Gen. 1. Note that it moves to an affirmation of possessing the nations (*gôyîm yîroš*), a motif to which we will return.
18. Cf. Gen. 17:5–8. The power of this affirmation is evident in the repetition *bim'od me'od* (vs. 6), and the several uses of *'ôlam*. Again the speech of multiplying ends in the promise of the land as an eternal possession (*'aḥuzzat 'ôlam*, vs. 8).
19. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 58, notes the last two verbs are especially strong.
20. Elliger, *op. cit.*, p. 143, in his last paragraph makes a ringing affirmation: "In the Babylonian exile the word originates as a

comfort and a warning of the marvelous, powerful and sovereign God of the promise, who is Lord of world history and in particular of the history of Israel, and who remains immovably committed to his goal, namely, a great pepole returned to eternal possession of the land of Canaan."

21. The RSV rendering of *šar^{e}sû*.
22. The double use of "multiply" in the same line may suggest a difficulty; BH proposes reading *ûr^{e}dû* (subdue) for *ûr^{e}bû* (multiply) which would strengthen the parallel with 1:28. However, *ûr^{e}bû* is a good parallel to *šar^{e}ṣû* as it now stands.
23. This combination of words, "Fear and dread," clearly was not created by the priestly writers; they deliberately chose a word-pair that had in the past always been used for holy war contexts: the faithful were enjoined to trust Yahweh in the battle and not to be faithless. In what are perhaps older texts, the formula is used in Josh. 8:1 (concerning Ai) and 10:25 (concerning the battle in the south). In both cases it has to do with Israel's accession to the Promised Land under the leadership of Yahweh. While the texts in their present form are in materials related to DtrH, there can be no doubt that this formula comes from older traditions about holy war, in which Israel was called from fear to faith. A series of texts employ the same formula, though most of these are clearly later texts (Deut. 1:21; 31:8; Josh. 1:9). An earlier usage appears in 1 Sam. 17:11, wherein Israel did not trust Yahweh and so feared the Philistines.

A closely parallel form is used in two other texts. The term *ḥat* has given way to *paḥad*, but the meaning and emotional power is unchanged:

> No man shall be able to stand against you; The LORD your God will lay the *fear* of you and the *dread* of you upon all the land that you shall tread, as he promised [Deut. 11:25, RSV, italics added]. This day I will begin to put the *dread* and *fear* of you upon the peoples that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you [Deut. 2:25, RSV, italics added].

While the second of these is apparently DtrH and therefore late, the reference in Deut. 11:25 has the marks of being early. Moreover it uses the term *dārāk* not unlike "subdue" in Gen. 1:28.

On the basis of this evidence there can be little doubt that P here employs an old conquest formula to speak about reentering the land after the flood, a usage not unlike the entry into the land in the Moses-Joshua period. The P usage unmistakably relates to reentry of the land after the exile.

24. "Genesis 8:21 und die Urgeschichte des Jahwisten," *KuD*, 7 (1961), p. 69 ff.
25. The use of *'æræṣ* is remarkable and cannot be accidental. In the formulae of the flood narrative we have cited, the term is used in all three texts and twice in 8:17. It is also used in the full formula of Gen. 1:28. In the pattern of five verbs it is coupled to the third one and so occupies a central position. And of course it is the implicit object of the fourth and fifth verbs. Elliger, *op. cit.*, p. 134, has noted that in Num. 20 a key question concerns which generation will enter the land, that of the sinful fathers or their children (Num. 20:12, 24). This fits well with the question put during the exile of whether the sons of the rebellious generation (which apparently is responsible for the exile) will return to the land (cf. Ezek. 18). Elliger also notes the land motif in the discussion of Ex. 29:45 concerning the dwelling of God, as well as in Num. 13:2; 26:12. Thus, even in the legislative sections, concern for the land is visible.

    Wolff, in his discussion of the Yahwistic kerygma, chapter 3 above, has suggested that the "land" spoken of there refers to the political realities in the tenth century. In P, in parallel fashion, "earth" surely relates to the political reality of being removed from the land and hoping for a return. A quite fresh option for exegesis is apparent when *'æræṣ* is rendered "land" rather than "earth." There can be little doubt that this is one way in which Israel politicized and historicized mythological motifs.
26. In the old sermonic materials of Deuteronomy, e.g., 8:12-16, there is no doubt that the purpose of the land is fertility, productivity, security, on which cf. the blessings and curses of Deut. 28 and Lev. 26, many of which concern well-being in the land, and as the land is blessed or cursed it is the source of life or death. Succinctly, in Lev. 26:6, "I will give well-being in the land," (*šalôm ba'aræs*) and in Jer. 29:10-11, "I will establish my good word to return you to this place . . . [with] thoughts of well-being [*šalôm*]. . . ."
27. Samuel R. Külling, *Zur Datierung der "Genesis-P-Stücke," namentlich des Kapitel Genesis 17* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok, 1964), has argued that this chapter is very early, but his argument has not gained any significant following though it is no doubt true that the chapter contains early elements.
28. I am skipping over the extended P narrative in Gen. 23 because our formula does not occur there. However, M. R. Lehmann, "Abraham's Purchase of Machpelah and Hittite Law," *BASOR*, 129 (1953), pp. 15 ff., has argued on the basis of a Hittite parallel that P, when he does not use the kerygmatic formula, uses a story of

land purchase to legitimize a new conquest. It is surprising that even though the narrative is P and many scholars have accepted Lehmann's proposal, to my knowledge it has not noticeable altered our understanding of P's theological interest. It is scarcely enough to say that Gen. 23 has P being interested in owning the land, without relating that to the more general question of the intent of P. An exception may be noted: G. von Rad, "The Promised Land and Yahweh's Land in the Hexateuch" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch, p.* 90, does indeed assert this meaning for P. More recently G. M. Tucker, "The Legal Background of Genesis 23," *JBL,* 85 (1966), pp. 77–84, has raised important questions about Lehmann's generally accepted hypothesis.

29. P's statement is reminiscent of the much older statement in 24:60.

30. The name " 'El Shaddai" is of course the peculiar property of P in terms of its theological importance. There are a few other uses in the old poems (Gen. 49:25; Num. 24:4, 16) but these do not affect its function in the tradition. It is a key to P's theology of revelation (cf. Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 48:3 and especially Ex. 6:2-5) but its meaning is obscure. Presumably its meaning can be determined by relating it to extra-Biblical materials, but that is of very little help in understanding P. For a review of philological data, cf. Bailey, "Israelite 'El Šadday and Amorite Bêl Šadê," *JBL,* 87 (1968), pp. 434–438.

31. The formula in 35:11 is noteworthy (a) because it mentions kings to come from the family of promise, clearly a reference back to the Abraham-David pattern of royalty (cf. 17:6 and Ronald E. Clements, *Abraham and David* [Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1967]), and an allusion to a political hope for the future not unlike II Isaiah and (b) because of the double use of *'æræṣ* in vs. 12:

The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac
I give to you
and to your seed after you, I give
the land.

The double use is chaistic so there can be no doubt of emphasis.

32. Methodologically it is important to distinguish between the task of philology and the task of Biblical theology which seeks to understand the mesage of the tradition. For the latter, the philology for the divine name is not particularly important and too much should not be made of it.

33. The term for possession *'aḥaz* is different from those we have earlier encountered, but the substance is unchanged. This term is especially preferred by P.

34. Albrecht Alt, "Der Gott der Väter" in *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 1959), has shown that the land promise is very old and deeply rooted in patriarchal tradition. Cf. also Frank M. Cross, Jr., "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," *HTR*, 55 (1962), pp. 225–259, for a more recent discussion of the data.
35. The subject has been thoroughly reviewed recently by Gerhard Wehmeier, *Der Segen im Alten Testament* (Basel: F. Reinhardt Verlag, 1970); and Willy Schottroff, *Der altisraelitische Fluchspruch* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), p. 211, notes that the priestly combination "be fruitful and multiply" occurs only in Jer. 3:16; 23:3; and Ezek. 36:11 outside of P. The promise of again multiplying is also an important theme in the exile for II Isaiah; cf. Is. 49:21; 54:1-3.
36. Of special interest and importance is the use of "subdue" in 2 Sam. 8:11, describing the successes of David in a text which is early:
    > . . . these also king David dedicated to the lord, together with the silver and gold which he dedicated from all the nations which he subdued [*kibbēš*]. . . .
37. That data has been summarized and discussed in many places. Cf. Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2d ed. 1951), and Claus Westermann, *Genesis Accounts of Creation*, pp. 26 ff. Westermann, pp. 104 ff., provides an extensive bibliography.
38. On the centrality of Sabbath for the exile, cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, 79.
39. This is clear in many of his writings, e.g., *Genesis, Old Testament Theology*, I, *The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch*. In *OT*, I, 135, he writes that the Hexateuch "moves in stately procession through the wilderness towards the last promise, the land of Canaan." The last lines of his Hexateuchal study (p. 78) echo that affirmation: "From the creation of the world onwards, what a remarkable road, what vicissitudes, what a wealth of divine ordinances and plans lead to this one goal—the Settlement! But then the Hexateuch is not solely concerned with the religion of Israel, nor even with claiming for God all human allegiance; it aims to lay a foundation for God's kingdom on earth, and to lay it on the bedrock of all human existence."
40. The dating of the exile seems for now secure: cf. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, 79. Elliger has gone far in showing that P does not contain a program which will fit one time as well as another, as is often asserted of his "static" cultic interests, but rather a program which corresponds precisely to the needs of the

exile. Like the other Pentateuchal traditions, this tradition was composed to meet a crisis. Clearly, dating these traditions is not an academic exercise but is essential to knowing the interaction between word and history.

41. The land tradition holds together the very old promise motif which Alt has discerned, and Israel's moment of greatest land control in the time of the united monarchy. Thus David and Solomon embody the fulfillment of the old promises.
42. See the summary of P. D. Miller, Jr., "The Gift of God: the Deuteronomic Theology of the Land," *Interpretation,* 23 (1969), pp. 451–465.
43. Cf. C. Stuhlmueller, "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaias," *CBQ,* 21 (1959), pp. 429–467, and Rolf Rendtorff, "Die theologische Stellung des Schöpfungsglaubens bei Deuterojesaja," *ZTK,* 51 (1954), pp. 3–13.

    For a more general comparison of II Isaiah and the Priestly traditions, cf. A. Eitz, *Studien zum Verhältnis von Priesterschrift und Deuterojesaja* (Heidelberg: Unpublished Dissertation, 1970). I am grateful to Gary Stansell for this reference. Unfortunately Eitz has not specifically examined conquest motifs.
44. That P's kerygma centers in a new land-possession had been suggested by Elliger and now is made clearer by Horst Dietrich Preuss, *Jahweglaube und Zukunftserwartung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1968), p. 91. Preuss pays particular attention to Num. 14:20-24. In that pericope, several important priestly motifs converge: (a) that the land will be filled with glory parallels Ex. 40:34-38, thought by many to be the focus of P; (b) but the statement is drawn into a larger statement about the land, looking back to the promise of the fathers (vs. 23) and projecting forward to the possession of the land by the faithful, symbolized by Caleb (vs. 24); and (c) the overall concern of the unit is to distinguish the faithless generation of the past, who cannot enter the land, from the future generation, who will possess it, a contrast especially appropriate to the moment of the exile before reentry. Preuss, p. 123, cites on the new land-taking also Ezek. 11:4-21; 36:11-32; 37:1-28; Hos. 2:21-23; and culminating in Matt. 5:5. Needless to say, II Isaiah also shares in that motif (so Preuss, p. 38).
45. The lawsuits of II Isaiah of course sharpen the question of the relative power of Yahweh and the Babylonian gods. Clearly P is concerned with the same issue as it relates to holding and reentering the land.
46. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* II, 373, notes the open-endedness of the conquest symbolism. While his comments con-

cern the New Testament, certainly the same utilization of types is pertinent within the Old Testament itself.

47. Cf. my article, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historian," *Interpretation,* 22 (1968), pp. 387 ff. Because the adjective is peculiarly appropriate to land, it is unlikely that the statement in Gen. 1:31 would refer to anything other than creation, i.e., the Promised Land, already deeply appreciated in the old tradition, cf. e.g., Gen. 6:2.
48. Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Young, 1951), pp. 78–83.
49. While the suggestions of (a) the formula, "It is good," and (b) the Sabbath as land-rest are not developed and may be precarious in this connection, it is sufficient to note that very much of the text begins to cluster around the gift of the fruiful land as Yahweh's supremely creative act.
50. Koch, *op. cit.,* p. 41, in a remarkable statement, has seen that the cult is to make holiness possible. In his powerful final paragraphs, Koch describes P as seeing God's people living always between God and nothing, between health and sin, between lostness and salvation. The cult of P addresses the problem. Perhaps Koch's insights can be more directly related to our theme. Cult is to ensure the holiness necessary to retain the land.
51. The hermeneutical structure of promise-fulfillment in the work of von Rad and Zimmerli, for example, depends on the continuity of early promise and later historical fulfillment. The genealogies are to be understood in terms of this hermeneutic, and there is no doubt that P affirms his own time as the time of the fulfillment of the promises of creation.
52. It is not the purpose of this chapter to relate P to the present. But it can be noted that this kerygma has radical implications in the midst of political, economic, and cultural upheavals which will determine the future of the disinherited and disenfranchized.

CHAPTER 7: The Continuing Task of Tradition Criticism

1. Leonhard Rost, "Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids" in *Das kleine Credo und andere Studien zum alten Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1965), pp. 119–253.
2. See especially James Flanagan, "Court History or Succession Document? A Study of 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2," *JBL,* 91 (1972), pp. 172–181; and L. Delekat, "Tendenz und Theologie der David-Salomo-Erzählung" in *Das ferne und nahe Wort,* ed.

Leonhard Rost (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1967), pp. 26–36. Flanagan provides the other pertinent bibliography.

3. See Gerhard von Rad, "The Beginnings of Historical Writing in Ancient Israel" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966), pp. 166–205. But see Walter Brueggemann "On Trust and Freedom," *Interpretation,* 26 (1972), pp. 3–19, for an appreciation of the narrative's theme of faith in God.
4. Walter Brueggemann, "David and his Theologian," *CBQ,* 30 (1968), pp. 156–181, has suggested close links of structure and motif between the two pieces of literature.
5. Hans Walter Wolff, "Hoseas geistige Heimat," *TLZ,* 81 (1956), cols. 83–94, has suggested the basis upon which Hosea makes his case. See the criticism and appreciation of this connection by Rolf Rendtorff, "Reflections on the Early History of Prophecy in Israel" in *History and Hermeneutic,* ed. Robert Funk (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 18–27. Rendtorff shows the strong connections of tradition between Elijah and Hosea. On the large questions of religious loyalty and political manipulation see the various essays of George Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972).
6. See the discussion of the text by George Coats, "Abraham's Sacrifice of Faith," *Interpretation,* 27 (1973), pp. 389–400, for a methodologically self-conscious treatment.
7. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), II, 263–277.
8. On the theological crisis and the literature of the exilic period see especially Peter Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (Old Testament Library Series; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968); and Enno Janssen, *Juda in der Exilszeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956).
9. Norman Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations* (Chicago: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., rev. ed. 1962), chapter 3.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 63, footnote 1. Quoting J. C. Todd, Gottwald writes of the exile "The circumstances which led up to it, the disaster itself, and the consequences which followed, form the subject of the whole [Old Testament]."
11. The dating of Job is of course not certain, but a strong case can be made for placing Job between Jeremiah and II Isaiah. See especially the various statements of Samuel Terrien on this dating.
12. Reference is here made to the various hope passages in Jeremiah 29–33. The relation between Jeremiah and Deuteronomic traditions is complex but has no bearing on the issue at hand. See S.

Herrmann, *Die prophetische Heilserwartungen im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965), pp. 188–204.

13. Hans Walter Wolff, *The Old Testament: A Guide to Its Writings,* trans. Keith R. Crim (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 32–35.
14. For Westermann's attempt to find the focus of P in the concept of "glory," see chapter 2, footnote 14, above.
15. Walther Zimmerli, "The Word of God in the Book of Ezekiel" in *History and Hermeneutic,* p. 13, concludes with the statement," In Ezekiel we hear a curious and strange formulation of sola gratia." This stress is made concerning P by Machholz and in the present essay by Brueggemann.
16. Bertil Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1963), pp. 214–239, sees Deuteronomic theology as one of two important sources for the theology of Lamentations.
17. Walter Brueggemann, "Isaiah 55 and Deuteronomic Theology," *ZAW,* 80 (1968), pp. 191–203, has suggested affinities between the Dtr historian and Second Isaiah.
18. See chapter 2, footnote 11, above. Cross has called into question the primary assumption of Noth that DtrH is totally an exilic product. Noth's hypothesis has been the premise of the entire recent discussion. Cross has objected to Wolff's (and Noth's) dating on the ground that the idea of the total destruction of Jerusalem does not appear until the books of Kings, i.e., it is absent in Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. While his judgment may indeed be correct, the force of his argument is considerably reduced if it is recognized that according to historians (a) the requirement of destruction has no need to appear until the grossness of Solomon, and (b) in any case the centrality of the temple in 1 Kings 8 may require restraint on the theme of destruction until after the temple is in the picture, safely dedicated. Such interpretation would explain why the announcement of destruction is delayed. Moreover as Machholz has noted, delay would render the passage where both exile and destruction of the temple are first announced (1 Kings 9:1-9) all the more climactic. That pericope is intentionally located just after the prayer of dedication, when the historian begins to play upon the theme which Cross regards as exilic. In contrast to the judgment of Cross, I suggest the delay in the announcement does not have to do with dating but with the structure of the narrative: the historian reserved his bombshell for emphasis. It may well be that in his search for the historical settings of texts, Cross has overlooked the dialectic of promise and threat, which may be

understood as subtle and ironic, and may not therefore need to be explained in terms of literary strata as he has suggested.

19. See especially the discussion of James Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), with special reference to pp. 91–121.
20. Basic studies on Chronicles include Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1957), I; and von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des chronistischen Werkes* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1930); on which see also his *Old Testament Theology,* I, 347–354. On locating the central tendency of the literature see the discussions of D. N. Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," *CBQ,* 23 (1961), pp. 436–442; Robert North, "Theology of the Chronicler," *JBL* 82 (1963), pp. 369–380; and William Stinespring, "Eschatology in Chronicles," *JBL,* 80 (1961), pp. 209–219; and now most recently, Roddy L. Braun, "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles," *JBL,* 92 (1973), pp. 503–516. In relation to the essays of Wolff and Brueggemann presented here, the closest parallel treatment of the Chronicler is by Jacob Myers, "The Kerygma of the Chronicler," *Interpretation,* 20 (1966), pp. 259–273. See also von Rad, "The Levitical Sermons in 1 and 2 Chronicles" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays,* pp. 267–280.
21. This antithesis had already been stated by von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild,* contrasting eschatological and nomistic forms of faith, and later it was argued to be the dominant motif of postexilic faith by Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1968).
22. See Paul Hanson, "Jewish Apocalyptic against its Ancient Near Eastern Environment," *RB,* 78 (1971), pp. 31–58; idem, "Zechariah 9 and the Recapitulation of an Ancient Ritual Pattern," *JBL,* 92 (1973), pp. 37–59; and especially his programmatic essay, "Old Testament Apocalyptic Reexamined," *Interpretation,* 25 (1971), pp. 454–479.
23. See Frank M. Cross, "New Directions in the Study of Apocalyptic" in *Apocalypticism,* ed. Robert W. Funk (New York: Seabury Press, Inc. 1969), pp. 157–165. Cross builds on the themes already indicated by Gunkel in the appeal to the old mythic traditions of creation and chaos.
24. See Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) on the current successes of New Testament scholarship in locating the theological *tendenz* of a particular writer. Although he uses broader and less precise methods, Perrin seeks an objective not unlike that of Wolff.

25. We again note the radical position taken by Wink on this kind of question. On p. 12, *op. cit.* (chapter 1, footnote 1, above), he specifically discusses the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis: "There can be little quarrel that the historical significance of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis (which no one today accepts as then formulated) was its usefulness as a method for destroying the conservative view of Biblical origins and inspiration, thereby destroying its entire ideology. . . . Today, however, that war is largely over and Biblical critical scholarship has become the established status quo. Now the unconscious ideological elements in its position have become visible. And the unhappy consequence of this unmasking is not just that liberal Biblical scholarship also proves to have been ideological, but that it has ceased to be utopian, and no longer moves toward a greater comprehension of truth."
26. Sanders' discussion places the issue of authority in quite a fresh context: in the history of stories the community has come to believe about itself. This understanding of authority has important connections with H. Richard Niebuhr's understanding of revelation in community noted above (chapter 1, footnote 2). It may also illuminate the current pervasive interest in stories and storytelling from such diverse sources as Margaret Mead, Sam Keen, and Harvey Cox.

Notes To Addendum

1. That erosion of confidence is evident in the third edition of John Bright's *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981). Bright continues to be committed to a view of the history of Israel based on the synthesis of Albright and his students. But the tone of the claims for that synthesis is much less abrasive and strident. It is as though there is a new sober respect for the complexities of history that archaeological method cannot resolve or fully reduce.
2. The conventional term "patriarchal" is increasingly objectional for its exclusive character. It is likely a preferable practice to refer to the narratives of Gen. 12–50 as "ancestral narratives," a practice followed here.
3. John van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) and his earlier statement, "Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period," *VT,* 22 (1972), pp. 448-459.
4. Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* (*BZAW,* 133; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974).
5. John J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (*JOST Supp,* 5;

Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, 1978).

6. H. Darrell Lance, *The Old Testament and the Archaeologist* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).
7. Rolf Rendtorff, *Das überlieferungeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuch* (*BZAW*, 147; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977) and "Der 'Jahwist' als Theologe? Zum Dilemma der Pentateuchkritik," *VT Suppl,* 28 (1975), pp. 158-166. The latter is now happily translated as "The 'Yahwist' as Theologian? The Dilemma of Pentateuchal Criticism," *JSOT*, 3 (1976), pp. 2-10. That issue of *JSOT* includes a number of critical responses to Rendtorff plus a thoughtful review of his book by Ronald Clements, pp. 46-56. That issue of *JSOT* is the most important summary of the current discussion.
8. Now in English, "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), pp. 1-78.
9. The struggle with Rendtorff's proposal and the possibility it offers is illustrative of the use of "paradigm" by Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Rendtorff has indeed proposed a revolution in scholarly methodology.
10. In the present volume, for example, Wolff (p. 44) follows von Rad when he speaks of "the high literary culture which the Yahwist shows..." See a critical summary of this interpretation by Brueggemann, "Yahwist," *IDB Suppl*, pp. 971-975.
11. James L. Crenshaw, *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (New York: KTAV, 1976), pp. 16-20.
12. Hans H. Schmidt, *Der sogenannte Jahwist: Beobachtungen und Fragen zur Pentateuchforschung* (Zurich: Theologisher Verlag, 1976). See also his comments, "In Search of New Approaches in Pentateuchal Research," *JSOT*, 3 (1976), pp. 33-42, and the review of his book by G. J. Wenham in the same issue of *JSOT*, pp. 57-60.
13. See, e.g., Terence E. Fretheim, "The Theology of the Major Traditions in Genesis–Numbers, *Review and Expositor*, 74 (1977), pp. 305-311, and Halligan, *A Critique of the City in the Yahwist Corpus* (Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1975). Ludwig Schmidt, "Überlegungen zum Jahwisten," *EvTh*, 37 (1977), p. 239. and *passim*, argues vigorously for a tenth-century date in the context of the empire.
14. See the review of Peter Craghan, "The Elohist in Recent Literature,"

Biblical Theological Bulletin, 7 (1977), pp. 23-35, and the thoughful summary of T. E. Fretheim, "Elohist," *IDB Suppl*, pp. 259-263.

15. Karl Jaros, *Die Stellung des Elohisten zur Kanaanäischen Religion* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974).
16. *Op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.
17. H. Klein, "Ort und Zeit des Elohisten," *EvTh*, 37 (1977), pp. 247-260.
18. The *Elohist and North Israelite Traditions* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 101-106. See the brief citation "Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations," *HTR*, 58 (1965), p. 455.
19. Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) chapter 6, and his paper, "The Message of P," *Die Botschaft und die Boten*, ed. by Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), pp. 57-66. See also the discussion of Terence E. Fretheim. "The Theology of the Major Traditions in Genesis–Numbers," *Review and Expositor*, 74 (1977), pp. 314-319, in which he treats P under the caption, "Theology Forged in a Time of Despair."
20. Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," *CBQ*, 38 (1976), pp. 275-292.
21. *Ibid.*, 284.
22. Eugene E. March, "The Priestly Tradition: A Theology for Sojourners," a paper presented before the Society of Biblical Literature, 1976.
23. Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1975) chapter 17.
24. Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960).
25. Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). On p. 7, n. 8, Haran acknowledges that he follows the lead of Kaufmann, but that his reasoning is somewhat different from that of Kaufmann. My own impression is that the case is made much more carefully and precisely by Haran, who is not interested in the larger, schematic questions of Wellhausen's Hegelianism, which concerned Kaufmann. Haran (p. 204), summarizes his thesis:

> In brief, the authors of P report a temple legend severed from its actual referent, a legend which turned into a literary treatise when the temple itself was no longer in existence. The temple of Shiloh became at their hands an artistic monument, the centre of a recorded utopian system, within the atmosphere of the temple of Jerusalem.

B. A. Levine, "Priestly Writers," *IDB Suppl*, pp. 683-687, has noted

and appreciated the advance of Haran's approach beyond that of Kaufmann. Levine's statement is a helpful presentation of the main issues.

26. This issue in interpretation is at the root of much of the current discussion concerning "literary" and "historical" modes of interpretation. On "stenic" and "tensive" interpretation, I have found the discussion of Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978) chapter 2, to be especially helpful, even though her work is derivative concerning the categories of literary criticism. On the function of imagination as it impinges on modes of interpretation, see the brief comment of Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), pp. 205-212. On the function of imagination in interpretation, see Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture* (New York: Schocken, 1979), p. xiii and *passim.* Fishbane speaks variously of "reflective imagination," "projective imagination," (p. 125) and "historical imagination" (p. 140). On the liberating role of imagination in interpretation, see especially Paul Ricoeur, "The Language of Faith," *USQR*, 28 (1973), pp. 213-224, reprinted in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. by Charles E. Reagan and David Stewart (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), especially pp. 230-238. Now I do not suggest that these "constructive" works are to be preferred to an analysis such as that of Haran, but only that such different perspectives and procedures will inevitably yield very different results.
27. The matter has been fully and carefully reviewed by Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, JSOT Suppl*, 18 (1981).
28. Rudolf Smend, "Das Gesetz und die Völker: Ein Beitrag zur deuteronomistischen Redaktionsgeschichte," *Probleme biblischer Theologie*, ed. by Hans Walter Wolff (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971), pp. 494-509.
29. Walter Dietrich, *Prophetie und Geschichte: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk* (*FRLANT*, 108; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972).
30. Timo Veijola, *Die ewige Dynastie* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1975).
31. I have the impression that the same principle is operative when Cross assigns elements of the text to different editors. Such a way of dividing the text precludes any deliberate literary incongruities.
32. Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist* (see n. 26).
33. *Ibid.*, 12-16.

34. *Ibid.*, 74, 84; cf. 162.
35. *Ibid.*, 15-16.
36. Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979). In 1976, George W. Coats, *From Canaan to Egypt* (*CBQ* Monograph Series, 4; Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America), especially pp. 55-79, evidenced great sensitivity to these issues. Coats is well aware of the problematic of source criticism and its inappropriateness for a theological agenda. In a very careful way he pays attention to source analysis, but his guiding inclination is to try to see the entire narrative as it is presented to us:

    > The point is that the MT should constitute the basic subject for exegesis. The point of departure is thus not a reconstruction of a Yahwistic text, or an Elohistic text, or a nomadic text. Rather the point of departure should be the MT in its final form, the received text. The presupposition behind this point is that the MT is a unified and consistent text open for exegesis as it stands *unless* firm evidence proves to the contrary that it comprises two or more sources or requires reconstruction. It would therefore be inappropriate methodology, so it seems to me, to assume from the beginning that any given text in the Pentateuch is composite, with the primary task a division of the composition into its various parts. Rather one should assume methodologically that the text he may want to analyze is a literary unity. Moreover, since the MT now stands in a unified form, it is not necessary to prove the literary unity. The burden of proof would lie on the opposite argument. It would be necessary to prove, should the evidence warrant such a belief about any given text, that the text reflects a synthetic unity composed of two or more distinct textual layers (p. 58).

37. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.
40. As I have indicated in my brief comments, "The Childs Proposal: A Symposium," *Word and World*, 1 (1981), pp. 111-115, I believe there is important slippage between Childs' *theological* agenda and the *literary* grounds on which he seeks to make his point. It seems to me that the point must be made by way of theological argument and not in terms of literary shape. Childs' insistence on this may have some merit, but as a literary argument as such, it must compete with alternative literary proposals. Needless to say, Childs' proposal has received serious critical response. The most formidable responses known to me are

those of James Barr, "Childs' Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture," *JSOT*, 16 (1980), pp. 12-23, and Walter Harrelson in *JBL*, 100 (1981), pp. 99-103.

41. In their commentary on Hosea, Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 24, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1980) tend to be quite critical of Wolff's form-critical method. Nevertheless they are appreciative of his theological sensitivity: "We have already remarked on the limitations resulting from Wolff's commitment to a strict literary-historical approach; but these are balanced by the positive and appreciative tone of his theological exposition" (p. 76). In the hands of such an expositor, the method may not be the overriding issue.
42. That new agenda, which concerns source analysis in the Pentateuch and the attempt to see the text whole, is evidenced in the balanced and judicious statement of Bernhard W. Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1–11," *JBL*, 97 (1978), pp. 23-29. And see now his fuller, more programmatic statement of these issues in "Tradition and Scripture in the Community of Faith," *JBL*, 100 (1981), pp. 5-21. Note should also be taken of the fine study of David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (*JSOT Suppl*, 10, 1978). Clines alludes (pp. 7-8) to these essays, but his own work is a proposal for a "more holistic approach" which begins with "the Pentateuch in its final form" (pp. 8, 10). Clines groups the present essays under the general methodological approaches which are "atomistic" and which are obsessed with "geneticism." Clines, along with Polzin, is more cautious than is Childs, for it would seem to be a case of both/and. But that is now the question before scholars. Attention should also be called to the important and poignant article of Clines, "Story and Poem: The Old Testament as Literature and as Scripture," *Interpretation*, 34 (1980), pp. 115-127. Clines' insistence is that Biblical materials should be understood as *literature* and cannot be taken as *Scripture* until they have been appreciated and engaged as literature. In this regard, his agenda is in agreement with many of the recent developments noted here. However, Clines' categories are not very sharply defined. At the end of his piece, he distinguishes between the "meaning" that the text has on its own terms (which he endorses) and the "message" or "kerygma" of the text (about which he has great reservations). The point is well taken, if by message or kerygma is meant a tendency to reduce the matter or to

recast it in alien categories. But we must still ask if there is a necessarily mutual exclusion between the *primal intrinsic meaning* and the *interpreted message*. If one takes that with full seriousness, one might conclude that one may not utter a single interpretive comment because that already is to move from the text's own meaning to a message that has been processed by the interpreter. And clearly that exclusion is not what Clines has in mind.

On the one hand, it is clear that Clines and Childs, among others, are at a very different place methodologically than is reflected in these essays of Wolff. That cannot be disputed. But on the other hand, it is important that the issue not be falsely understood. In order to make the case, one may ask if Clines and the others do not come down with a kind of heaviness on "message" or "kerygma" that is inappropriate, given their own inclination also to find a theological affirmation in the text even if it is called "theme" rather than "message." Thus I suggest that the real issue concerns an analytical-dissecting tendency over against a more synthetic one. That is a very different issue than taking a primary meaning or finding a message, for all these interpreters, including Clines and Childs, work with enormous theological sensitivity and do go some distance in articulating the theological claim of the text. It does not matter if it is not called "message" or "kerygma" or "theme." It is nonetheless a meaning or affirmation not available in the text without being passed through the processing of these interpreters. Thus a problem of *literary method* should not be confused with a reluctance about *theological handling*. There is a growing reluctance about a certain literary method which has a propensity for dissection. But on the theological handling, it does seem to me that Childs and Clines want to do very much the same thing in the end that von Rad and Wolff have done before them.

43. Norman K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1979).
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-114.
45. On von Rad's basic study, see n. 8. Gottwald, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-99, is quite aware of the criticisms made of von Rad's work, especially by Weiser. But he also discerns in that literary study some important convergences with his own sociological analysis:

> For my part, von Rad has demonstrated that some sort of tradition-historical and cultic separation of the two streams of tradition does underlie the literary hiatus, but I contest the adequacy of the particular explanation he offers. I am willing to concede that von

Rad's hypothesis about originally disparate festival settings for the two types of tradition may correctly point back to the situation of the proto-Israelite peoples. . . .

Von Rad's analysis is not, however, so easily disposed of (pp. 89,91).

46. I have indicated in my review of his book, "The Tribes of Yahweh: An Essay Review," *JAAR*, 48 (1980), pp. 441-451, that Gottwald perhaps overstates the initiative of the social dynamic to the neglect of the theological factor. He is perhaps not sufficiently dialectical in his materialism. But on p. 697 he quotes Buber approvingly against all those sociologies which regard religious as "a kind of passive projection or mirror reflection of group feeling." He urges another kind of sociology of religion that affirms the energizing force of the religious factor. The hint is there, though I wish Gottwald had not understated that factor so much.
47. Note that Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 75, cites reliance upon this hypothesis as one of the weaknesses of the methods he critiques. While every such hypothesis is risky, it is impossible to imagine that scientific investigation can proceed without some governing hypotheses. Moreover, I do not believe that the theological interpretation of von Rad and Wolff is dependent upon certain scholarly constructs, even if the argument necessarily is cast in relation to the reigning theories. That is, the casting of the argument might be related to constructs of credo, covenant, action in the cult, tribal confederation, etc., but I do not think such constructs are decisive for the *theological* handling of the text. Given other scholarly constructs, the same theological handling might simply be given a different casting. Thus, an assault on certain *scholarly constructs* does not necessarily nullify a *theological interpretation* cast in relation to it.
48. Gottwald's attention to the social factors in the prophetic traditions has close parallels in Wolff's work, especially with reference to Micah. Cf. Wolff, "Micah the Moreshite—the Prophet and His Background," *Israelite Wisdom*, ed. by John Gammie (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 77-84. See his more expository treatment of Micah in *Micah the Prophet* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981). Gottwald's influence on the study of the prophets is evident in the fine study by Robert B. Coote, *Amos Among the Prophets* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), especially pp. 24-32. Coote's more precise sociological analysis is not very different from the conclusion Wolff has reached concerning the milieu of Micah.

49. On van Seter's article, see n. 3. It is instructive to observe the different ways of method, depending on the way the question is put. Gottwald uses social analysis primarily to discern the positive function of the text. Van Seters, on the other hand, is preoccupied with historical questions and is therefore primarily concerned to refute a common dating.
50. *Op. cit.*, p. 74.
51. Gottwald, "Sociological Matrix and Canonical Shape in Old Testament Studies," (unpublished paper, 1980) has offered a probing and suggestive discussion of the ways in which these approaches might be of mutual benefit.
52. Norman Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Series; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).
53. David Robertson, *The Old Testament and the Literary Critic* (Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Old Testament Series; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).
54. Polzin, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-13. Specifically, "A historical critical analysis of biblical material is necessary for an *adequate* scholarly understanding of what it means" (p. 3). "A competent literary analysis of biblical material is necessary for even a preliminary scholarly understanding of what this ancient text means" (p. 5). Thus Polzin sees both as necessary. But by his emphasizing respectively the words "adequate" and "preliminary," he leaves no doubt as to which must have priority.
55. Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
56. I use the term "proclamation" quite intentionally in the way suggested by Paul Ricoeur," "Manifestation and Proclamation," *The Journal of the Blaisdell Institute*, 12 (Winter 1978). See the especially discerning development of Ricoeur's model by David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 202-218, 371-404.
57. James A. Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of Canon," *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God*, ed. by Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller, Jr. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1976), pp. 531-560. Sanders has made the point in several places, but this is his clearest statement of the matter.
58. Paul Hanson, *Dynamic Transcendence* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978) has made a helpful use of the term dynamic. To be sure Hanson is not concerned with the dynamic of the sources/traditions as such, but with two trajectories which he terms "teleological" and "cosmic."

He further develops this argument in his book, *Diversity in the Bible: Maligned Guardian of the Living Word*, forthcoming from Fortress Press. See my summary statement of the two strands of tradition which roughly correspond to those of Hanson, in "Trajectories in OT Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel," *JBL*, 98 (1979), pp. 161-185. It is clear that such a study of these two trajectories would be objectionable to Clines and Childs on the same methodological, hermeneutical grounds as the old sources. Nonetheless, I do not see how the claims of the text can be fully discerned without attention to such a dynamic in the text.

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